



# PINES

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*The Pines Press*, December 2022

12751 Kimberley Ln, 77024 713-467-2234

### ADVENT SCHEDULE

#### **Saturday, December 3rd**

Sherwood Christmas Store Wrapping | 9:00 AM Fellowship Hall

#### **Thursday, December 15th**

Blue Christmas Worship Service | 11:30 AM Parlor (See page 2)

#### **Sunday, December 18th**

Christmas Cantata "*A Child This Day*" 10:45 AM

Christmas Lunch | 12:00 PM Fellowship Hall

#### **Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**

5:30 PM and 7:00 PM Sanctuary

#### **Christmas Day Worship and Breakfast**

Breakfast begins at 10:30 AM Fellowship Hall

Worship begins at 10:45 AM Fellowship Hall



# Pines Family News & Current Events

**The church office is open Monday - Thursday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. The office is closed on Fridays. If you need assistance on Friday, please call Cindy at 832-489-5989.**

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 November 13 through December 4th OR you can email or call Linda or Melissa 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 24<sup>th</sup>. Linda Aldred [lindaaldred1@aol.com](mailto:lindaaldred1@aol.com) Melissa Gravett [mgravett@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mgravett@sbcglobal.net)



## **Blue Christmas Worship Service** *A Time for Honoring Hurting Hearts* **December 15th at 11:30 AM**

Feeling a little lonely, lost or sad during this Advent Season? Please join others as we tend to our sadness, solitude, anger, resentment, loss, and fears. Society often expects these things to be pushed aside- not only at Christmas but throughout the year. Come honor yourself for a gentle hour of healing. Please bring a token of what represents these feelings. It may be a photo, a blanket, a necklace, a coffee cup...you decide. Feel free to bring a friend. I hope you allow yourself this gift. If you have questions, call Ann Guerra 713-471-9224

*Thank  
you* ❤️

**Dear Pines Friends,**

Ray joins me in thanking you for the autumn bouquet of flowers you sent to us. They are so pretty and we have been enjoying their beauty. We also want to thank you for all the prayers and thoughtful notes we have received from many of you, it makes our day! Blessings and good wishes to all our Pines friends, Sincerely, Lynn Staffacher

### **Church Seeking Nursery Workers: \$12-15 per hour based on age and experience.**

Contact [kristin@pinespc.org](mailto:kristin@pinespc.org) for more information. Do you love playing with babies and young children? Pines is looking for people ages 13 and up who are willing to be trained and cleared for childcare in the nursery. Most hours are on Sunday mornings, but special events are also available.

**Do you have any** orchestra or band instruments taking up space in your closet? Want to find a safe place to keep them where they will be used and appreciated? Call Laurie or the church office and they will help you with that.



**Please mark your calendars with the  
NEWSLETTER DUE DATE:  
December 16 (for the January 2023 issue)**

### **Second Sunday Lunch**

...will follow worship on Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at Café Express. This is a great time to join fellow Pines members for lunch and great conversation.



## Grace & Peace to you all,

The season of Advent and Christmas is upon us. This time of year is supposed to be a time where we are to wait with joyful anticipation for what is to come on what we now call Christmas day. For many, this season is full of joy and happiness as we anxiously await the celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace, but for some it only brings up memories of lost loved ones, or it is a reminder of joy lost due to financial, health, and/or physical and emotional problems.

The great gift of Christmas brings hope to all of us no matter where we are in life. The hope that is given to us by God in the grace of Jesus is a gift of love that is poured out for all. I pray you can share this gift of love and hope with others as Christ has called us to do. We have great opportunities to do this as a church family this season. Our Angel Tree project will share some hope with children at Sherwood Elementary. We have partnered with Sherwood for several years as we try to bring hope to some of the children and families who are not as financially advantaged as others. We have tried to bring hope through the Christmas Store, the meal bags that are made on a monthly basis, by financially supporting other activities, and by mentoring students. Hope is something we all can give, and what a great gift to give to someone who might be struggling to find hope.

Sharing hope comes in many forms and opportunities. You may also invite friends, neighbors, and families to worship with us during this wonderful season. The choir Christmas Cantata will be during worship Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. This beautiful music will surely be uplifting and a great reminder of the One true hope we all have. Following that service, we will have our annual Christmas lunch for all in attendance. As exciting and joyful as this season is for many of us, there are those who struggle emotionally during this time of year, so Pines will be offering a "Blue Christmas" service on Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 AM. This will be a quiet and contemplative service to honor those who are experiencing grief and struggling with loss. I also encourage you to invite all you know to our Christmas Eve Candlelight Services at 5:30 and 7:00. And this year we have a special treat, Christmas day will be on a Sunday! You and your family and friends are invited to come to breakfast and worship in the Fellowship Hall. Feel free to wear your pajamas and bring your favorite gift for a special blessing. We will read scripture, sing many Christmas hymns, and have fun as we worship the Newborn King!

I pray this season brings you hope and you can share that hope with others!

Merry Christmas,



# Family Ministry Calendar for December

## PLEASE HELP!

To keep growing and supporting our small but growing youth group we need help!

**Sunday evening program!** Adults (ages 19-99) to come help - no prep needed - just be present and have some fun yourself as well! Please arrive 5:45 PM to youth rooms and stay until the youth are picked up by 8 PM.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F44A4AB2BA0F9C07-pines>

**Dinner for youth on Sundays:** (10-14 people - paper products and drinks provided)  
[www.TakeThemAMeal.com/XAPG7147](http://www.TakeThemAMeal.com/XAPG7147)

### Calendar Highlights:

Dec 4 Children Advent Play in service

Youth Group 6-7:45 PM

Dec 11 youth group Christmas Party! Bring a wrapped fun pair of socks and a sweet! 6-7:45 PM

Dec 18 youth group Board game, Xbox and pool night - college age students welcome back!! 6-7:45 PM

Dec 25 no youth group

Small group Sunday school all ages Dec 4, 11 and 18 (no Sunday school Dec 25 or Jan 1)



### Advent Devotionals Are Here

Make sure you pick up your 2022 Advent Devotional written by Pines members. Copies are available throughout the church and will be posted online each day. Here is a sample of this year's devotional guide.

Proverbs 3:5-6 NKJV

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.*

Even though I was raised in church, I look back at my life and realize there have been times when I trusted in "me", more than the Lord. Those are the time when things got very messed up. I would muddle through and finally realize I just needed to trust in the LORD and let him handle the situation.

After going through the first Alpha class that was held at Pines many years ago, I realized that I was interrupting the Bible through the brain of a child. Alpha helped me to "grow up" and to start understanding the Bible was a true-life guide.

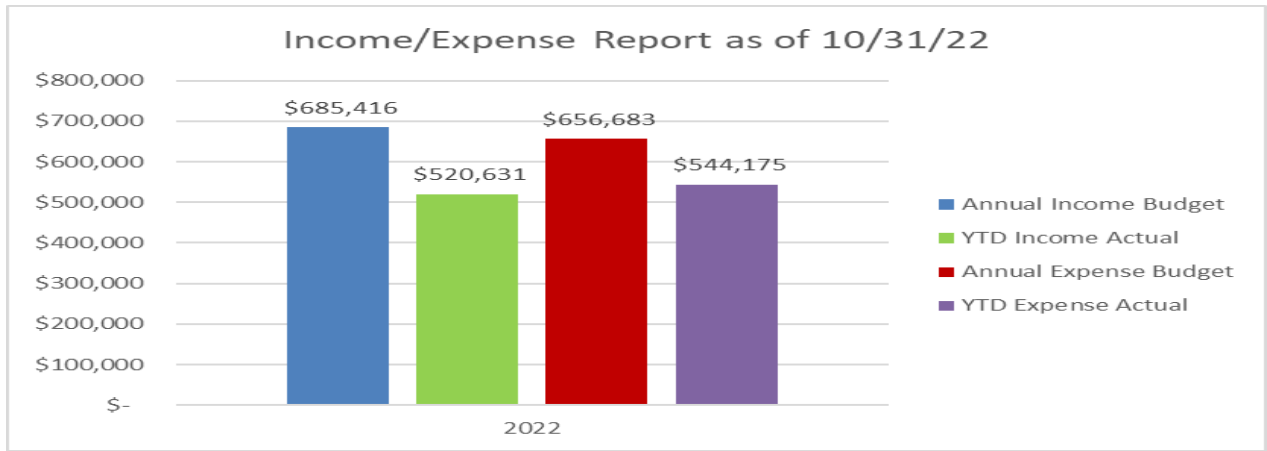
It is so easy to get wrapped up in the worldly things and focus on the negative instead of looking at all the positive things around me and give thanks for all the blessings I have received.

It is still hard for me to not worry about things I have turned over to GOD, but when those thoughts come into my head, I just say a quick prayer to GOD acknowledging he is in control and things will work out the way that is best for me.

*Prayer: My loving GOD, thank you for guiding me through life and for providing the many blessings you have bestowed on me. Amen*

Connie Sipp

# Stewardship



## STEWARDSHIP NOTES

1. Pledge income in October is below target for the 10 months. Pledge status reports were mailed to the congregation in late October. Non-pledge income is still trailing well below forecast and well below this same time last year.
2. Overall, committee expenses remain slightly below budget expectations. Property and worship expenses are above budget but currently offset by other committees underbudget expenses. Additional mission payments were made in November at the Thankfulness Luncheon.
3. Total Income was \$520,631; total expenses were \$544,175; leaving a Net Loss of \$23,544 for the year as of 10/31/22.
4. We are thankful for the successful Stewardship Campaign led by Jim and Beth Patterson this month. Early results are encouraging. As of 11/20/22, 73 pledges totaling \$467,740 have been received. This includes 7 new pledges so far, and is ahead of the results at this time last year. We are continuing to receive pledges each week and are very grateful to all families that have set Giving Goals thus far.
5. Giving Goal cards can be returned to the church office, placed in the collection plate during worship or emailed to Alexis Graham, our finance manager, at alexis@pinespc.org.

## Session

### Here are some highlights from the November Session meeting:

- Andy reported that he continues to receive positive comments about Pines' members and elders who hosted the Presbytery meeting at Pines on November 19.
- Session unanimously approved a request by Phil Wetz and Ann Guerra to lead a worship service honoring Healing Hearts on December 15, 2022 at 11:30 AM, to minister to people who are dealing with an emotionally painful loss in their lives during what can be a difficult time of the year. Cards with the dates of this and Pines' regular and Christmas worship services will be included in Taco and a Prayer bags to invite the community.
- Session approved a Congregational Meeting to be held after Worship on December 11, 2022, for the purpose of electing elder candidates to serve in the Elder Class of 2026. The nominees selected by the Congregational Nominating Committee are Linda Aldred, Shirley Bollich, Emily Gairo, Donna Partee, and Tim Timmons.
- A Security Task Force formed by Session will be meeting on Tuesday, November 29th to get cost estimates for consideration of recommendations for building security needs.

Craig Walker, Clerk

[with outstanding assistance of Shirley Bollich in my absence at the meeting!]





**When God wants** an important thing done in this world or a wrong righted, he goes about it in a very singular way. He doesn't release his thunderbolts or stir up his earthquakes. He simply has a tiny baby born, perhaps in a very humble home, perhaps from a very humble mother. And he puts the idea or purpose into a mother's heart. And she puts it in the baby's mind, and then --- God waits. The great events are babies, for each child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged with man, but is still expecting goodwill to become incarnate in each humble life. Edward McDonald

God has a beautiful and loving plan at our birth. If there have been any unexpected bumps or potholes on your journey, sharing with a trusted friend like a Stephen Minister could be very helpful. Bill Willis can be reached by calling the church office at 713-467-2234.



Merry Christmas

### **Pines Christmas Cantata Sunday December 18th**

You are cordially invited to a festive Christmas celebration for the whole family on Sunday **December 18th**.

Our choir will present **Christmas Cantata "A Child This Day"** during the worship hour and the Congregational Fellowship Committee has planned a traditional Christmas lunch of smoked ham and side dishes with dessert to follow. Please mark your calendars and join in a festive day of seasonal fellowship, great music and good food!



### **It's time for us to hold another Feed My Starving Children MobilePack on January 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>!**

We need you and your neighbors and friends to sign up to volunteer for our FMSC MobilePack! We need people ages 5-95+ to join us in packing meals to feed starving children around the world. There are jobs available for all abilities, from sitting and placing labels on food bags to running supplies to the different packing stations. We have a job and a need for you! To sign up contact Karen Davis or go online to <https://www.fmsc.org/volunteer-listing/?lid=12203&date=11%2F30%2F2022-02%2F28%2F2023&locationName=Pines%20Presbyterian%20Church>

Financial contributions are also appreciated. Approximately \$.25 feeds a child one meal, \$88 feeds a child for one year. Every quarter helps stop hunger.

**Can you help?**



**Friends** - I thought each of you might enjoy this photo of the celebration some of the Stephen Ministers had last Thursday to rejoice at Ann's having completed 25 hours of additional training to become a Stephen Leader. The scriptural verse noted on her cake (Acts 6:1-7) are the words which inspired the naming of this ministry which God has called her to undertake. Sending with joy, gratitude and love. Phil

# Missions

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**Calling all Taco-makers and Prayer Warriors!** Come join our Taco and a Prayer Team for school year 2022-23, and see first-hand what a fun, rewarding, and precious ministry this is. We have the privilege to give fresh breakfast tacos to folks who might have missed breakfast, or who might not have any other food for the day, or are just hungry for a taco and maybe a prayer. Our cheerful team members bring smiles and warm food to our neighbors in the name of Jesus Christ. We are rewarded with smiles, occasional cash donations, tears of gratitude, and sometimes even songs (from a school bus driver)! Join us!  
For more information contact the church office or Margaret Schafer.



and a prayer!

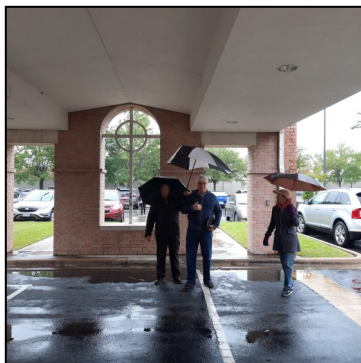


## **The Christmas Joy Offering - November 27 - December 18**

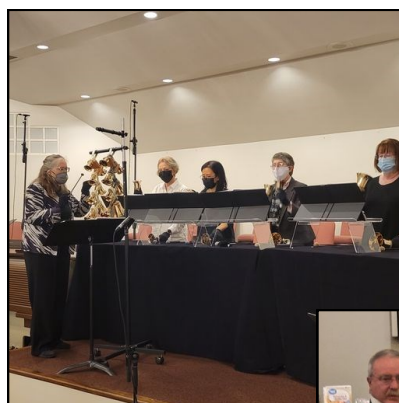
Through the Christmas Joy Offering, we reflect God's perfect gift to us in Jesus with our generous support of leaders past, present and future. Our gifts lead to hopeful futures for young people at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges, and equipping church workers and their families when emergency needs arise via the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions. Your generous support is greatly appreciated and needed.



**Please join us** as we gather for more Bingo in the Fellowship Hall on January 19th at 6:30 PM. There will be food and drinks provided and of course...lot's of fun with BINGO! Don't miss the fun! Contact Linda Aldred or the church office if you plan to attend so we can make sure there is plenty of food for all.



**THANK YOU** to everyone who volunteered to help host the November Presbytery Meeting here last month. What a blessing this church was to so many. We heard over and over again what a nice church we have, what kind greeters we had, what a service we provided to our Presbytery. I was proud of our church and all of the people that worked so tirelessly to show all the visitors from other churches that attended WE ARE PINES, a community of faith, love, grace and hospitality! Thank you!!





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