



PINES

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The Pines Press December 2024 / 12751 Kimberley Lane 77024 / 713-467-2234 / www.pinespc.org

It is a full December! We invite you to attend one or ALL of the December events listed below...

Advent @PINES

December 1:

Holy Communion during Worship | 10:45am
Family Advent Night | 5:00pm

December 1-22: Christmas Joy Gift Collection

December 4:

"Blue Christmas"

A Service of Wholeness and Healing | 12:30pm
Followed by Fellowship Lunch at Cafe Express See page 6

December 6: Parent's Night Out | 5:30-8:30pm

December 8: Space City Sound during Worship | 10:45am

December 15:

Christmas Cantata | "Candlelight Christmas" | 10:45am
Followed by Christmas Luncheon | 12:00noon See page 6

December 22:

Children's Christmas Play | "Christmas Time" | 10:45am

December 24:

Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship | 5:00 & 7:00pm
Holy Communion at Both Services See page 6

December 25:

Breakfast | 10:30am | Worship on Christmas Day | 10:45am

 PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
12751 Kimberley Ln | 713-467-2234 | pinespc.org



Pines Family News & Current Events

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.



Our prayers go out to the family of Rev Anne Beall who passed in November. Anne was the associate pastor here at Pines for many years and was loved by many. Her bright smile was contagious and her demeanor was kind, honest, funny and thoughtful. She will be missed here and in Wimberley where she and her husband Jim lived. Please keep Jim, Kristin, Catherine and their families in your prayers.

**Please mark your calendars with the
NEWSLETTER DUE DATE: December 20 (for the January 2024 issue)**



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

WHEN: Sunday December 15th following the Cantata worship service
WHAT: Traditional roast pork dinner with all the trimmings and a dessert buffet



Want to learn to play Mah Jong, or are you already a seasoned player? Suzi Wolfe is beginning a Mah Jong group in room W12 monthly on Thursday nights at 7. If you would be interested, please email Suzi Wolfe or call the church office and speak to Cindy.

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 17 through December 8th 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.



Second Sunday Lunch Bunch...will meet again in January of 2025. We look forward to seeing everyone in January!

Important Info...

In the event that the doors are not open for your group, please leave a note on the door to ask them to call your cell phone for entry.

Every group leader should have an entry card to come into the building. If you do not, please contact Cindy in the church office to assist with getting one for you. Propping the doors open not only wastes electricity, but also is a danger to those in the building in case of intruders. Please treat your church as your home. **And please, NEVER prop open the doors at any time!** Thank you.

PLEASE help us conserve energy...by remembering to turn off lights and AC when you leave the building. **If you turn it on, please turn it off!** Thank you so much! Your Property Committee

Grace & Peace to you in the name of the One whom we await,

We have now started the official countdown to the celebration of the day that changed the world. The day God broke into the world in the form of an innocent, helpless, human baby. This incredible day set into motion a movement that would eventually sweep across the planet. A movement that would dare to push back against political and religious authorities who struggled to see people as equals. It's a movement that continues this very day as we Christians, faithful followers of the Christ child, name, call out, and pushback against the injustices, prejudices, and hatred of our societies and cultures as we seek equitable justice, and welcome peace for all God's people. This is what we claim when we say we celebrate Christmas. When we say we celebrate the birth of Jesus, when we say the words "Merry Christmas", we are actuality saying "Yes" to what the Christ child will call us all to do.

God broke into the world to reform our attitudes, to redirect us back to what God's plan was originally. Jesus was sent to us not only to offer us eternal life, but to also remind us of the many ways we have fallen short of God's plan for us. Jesus, through his life, taught us what it meant to welcome the sinner and the saint, the broken and the whole, the rich and the poor, the Jew and the Gentile, the harlot and the social elite. This is the gift of Christmas. This is what Christmas really means. Churches have been known to say, "love came down at Christmas," and it did... and it still does. Love comes down at Christmas to change the world from a divided, hungry, homeless, and angry world, to one that lives out the words of the prophet Micah, "...to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?".

When we joyfully say the dangerous words "Merry Christmas" to everyone we meet, we are boldly saying thanks be to God for sending Jesus to us, to change our hearts, to change our thoughts, and to change our ways. We are saying we are excited about doing acts of justice and kindness as we humbly walk in the same footsteps of the one whom we call The Prince of Peace, Mighty God, Wonderful Counselor, Emmanuel God with us. So this Christmas, as you hand out sparkly wrapped gifts from beneath your Christmas tree, think about other ways you can share the true love and meaning of Christmas with those who are often on the outside of society and looking in. May your Christmas, and the Christmas of everyone around the world, be truly Merry!

Merry Christmas!



Andy

Family Ministry Calendar for December

PLEASE HELP!

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

December Calendar:

Thank you for an outstanding Trunk or Treat- please invite your friends and family to our upcoming Christmas celebrations. See pictures on page 12 from the Trunk or Treat event!

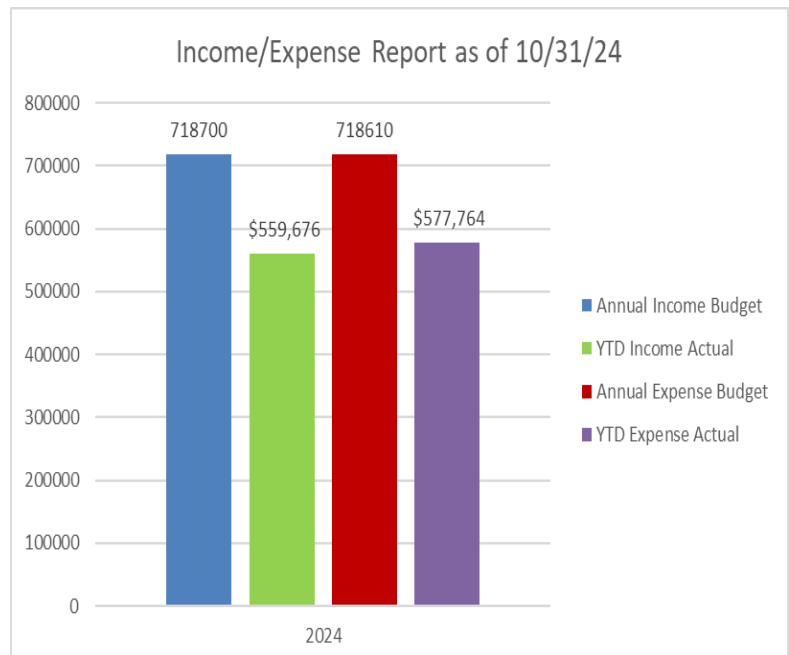
Support Youth Missions and get Award Winning BBQ! Place orders now: Pick up Dec 15-see page 11

- 1 Play Rehearsal Choir Room/ Ministry bags Fellowship Hall for all kids
- 1 Pines Youth Hand on Hand Ministry 12 noon
- 1 Family Advent Night
 - 3:30pm Usher Training
 - 4:00pm Rehearsal
 - 5:00-7pm Caroling, Dinner, Crafts, and Tree Lighting
- 6 Parents Night Out: Christmas! 5:30-8:30pm
- 8 Play rehearsal 9:15am Sanctuary
- 8 Youth Help with Raise up Family, then youth party- 3:30pm-7:30pm
- 14 Youth cook BBQ off site 2pm
- 15 Play rehearsal 9:15am Classrooms
- 15 **BBQ pick up See flyer on page 11**
- 22 Dress rehearsal and then Christmas Play Service
- 24 Christmas Eve Services 5 and 7
- 25 Christmas Day: Breakfast 10:30am, Service 10:45am both in the Fellowship Hall

Stewardship Notes:

The October 2024 financial statements can be summarized as follows:

1. Total income received through October was \$559,676 (77% of budget.) Pledge income was \$436,190 and unpledged income was \$52,950. Interest income has already exceeded the full year's budget. Total income is slightly behind budget through the first ten months of the year. Income is expected to catch up some in November as pledge status letters were mailed in late October.
2. Overall expenses were slightly below budget at \$577,764 (80% of budget). Property income has increased to \$53,376, which offsets gross property expenditures of \$234,120. Net property expenses, Christian education, congregational fellowship and worship expenses are below budget through October.
3. There was a Net Loss through October \$18,088, reflecting the below budget income for 10 months. November and December are typically catch up months for members' pledges and for year end giving.



Stewardship

If you would like to opt out of receiving this newsletter, or if your email is going to change, please send a note to cindy@pinespc.org and we will update your record.

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!

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 6th.



The church office is looking for volunteers to answer phones:

Monday through Thursday. We have 3 volunteers currently, but we need one 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 to get on the list. By the way...one of our long ago male members (Jack Long) used to answer the phones on occasion...just to give you gentlemen out there something to think about!

A couple of corny jokes for the month...



What goes Oh, Oh, Oh?

Santa walking backwards!



Your help is needed! Pines could use a volunteer kitchen manager....NO WAIT!!! Ann Guerra has stepped up to take over this position in the church! If you have any questions, please contact Ann or the church office to place orders, use the kitchen, or donate anything. Please remember...nothing should be donated to the kitchen before verifying with Ann or the church office to see if there is a need. Thank you Ann for helping!!!!

Session

The Session met for its regular Stated meeting on November 25th, 2024.

The November session meeting notes will be included in the January newsletter.

Brown Bag Book Club

If you are making plans for the New Year, mark your calendar for our next Brown Bag Book Club meeting. It is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18th at 12:00 Noon. Beth Patterson will be leading us in a discussion of the book, "The Ways We Hide," by Kristina McMorris. This is an action-packed novel about a female illusionist tasked with devising techniques for the Allies to evade Nazi capture in World War II.

Happy New Year! See you at our spring Brown Bag Book Club meeting!
Shirley Bollich



Due to medical challenges and other personal issues, the lectionary readings from Job that we have heard this Fall took on added meaning for me. For example, I closely identified with these paraphrased words from the Prayer of Confession in our October 20 worship service – *I wonder how it could happen to me and why God allowed it to happen at all.*

For much of the year, I grieved the loss of pain-free mobility and wondered why it had happened to me as I had devoted so much effort to physical fitness. At some point, most of us grieve a wide range of losses in addition to the loss of health – e.g. loss of a loved one; a relationship; a job; a financial setback; or a loss of faith. Such experiences can be especially painful during Advent when we want to celebrate the grace-filled gift of Jesus and to share joy with friends and family.

In an attempt to help us experience the full range of emotions that can be part of Advent, there will be a Service of Healing and Wholeness (aka “Blue Christmas” service) on December 4 at 12:30pm in the Pines sanctuary. The service is designed to help us identify the emotions in our hearts as we begin Advent and to encourage us to experience all of them. There will also be time to share what is in your heart for those who feel led to do so. Everyone is encouraged to invite friends and family members. All attendees are also invited to join in a time of fellowship at a complimentary lunch at Café Express in City Center following the worship service.

Regardless of whether you attend the service, I pray that you will remember the closing words of the Prayer of Confession from our October 20 service:

*Teach us that suffering is not sent to punish but, that through suffering,
We may better understand and help heal the pain of others.*

Finally, if you feel a need to seek ongoing help in dealing with a loss or difficult challenge in your life, feel free to contact Ann Guerra, Phil Wetz, or the church office to confidentially discuss the possibility of working with a Stephen Minister. Hoping to see many of you on December 4!

Phil Wetz and Ann Guerra



**Come Join the Christmas Angels
for a Holiday Lunch!**
**Fellowship Hall - December 15th
Following the Christmas Cantata**

**Traditional Roast Pork Dinner
with all the trimmings
Dessert Buffet**
**Provided at no cost by the
Congregational Fellowship Committee**

**CHRISTMAS EVE
AND
CHRISTMAS DAY
@PINES+**

December 24
Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship | 5:00 & 7:00pm
Holy Communion at Both Services
All Services Livestreamed

December 25
Breakfast | 10:30am
Christmas Day Worship | 10:45am
Bring a Gift for the “Blessing of the Gifts”
Fellowship Hall | No Livestream Christmas Day

12751 Kimberley Ln | 713-467-2234 | **PINESPC.ORG**



SHERWOOD ELEMENTARY READING BUDDIES

Pines Presbyterian members are volunteer *Reading Buddies* for Sherwood Elementary second graders who need a bit of help and encouragement on their journey to becoming proficient readers. As a Reading Buddy, you work one-on-one with a student during the school day for approximately 30-60 minutes once a week. Sometimes your student will read to you, and sometimes you will read to your student – it all depends on what seems needed at the time. The Reading Buddies program is especially attractive to people who are retired or otherwise have some free time during school hours. If you would like more (no-obligation) information, please contact: Cindy Coles, Dave Coles, or Val Aldred.

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

Mission Partner	Activity	Date	Location	Contact
The Restoration Team	Assist with storm recovery efforts	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) Next is Dec 6th	Pines	Margaret Schafer
Sherwood Elementary	Deliver Monthly Food Bags (requires lifting 20 lb. bags)	Beginning in February	Pines to Sherwood	Cindy Coles
	Reading Buddies	Fall/Spring	Sherwood	Cindy Coles; Dave Coles, Val Aldred
	Bulletin Board Team	Beginning spring semester	Sherwood	Cindy Coles
	Christmas Store	Wrapping Party Dec 8 th - 9 to noon	Pines	John Work
Montrose Street Reach	Shop for and deliver food to street ministry	Every other month Thursday evening (next is Dec 5 th)	Pines to Montrose location	Kathy Ropshaw
	Serve at Candlelight Thanksgiving Dinner	Wed, 11/27 (need to sign up by 11/13)	1110 Lovett (near Montrose and Westheimer)	Montrose Street Reach Vol Sign Up
	Advent Service Project – fill gift bags for homeless children	Sunday, Dec 1 st after worship @ Pines	Pines	Kathy Ropshaw-see more info on page 10 of this newsletter
Raise Up Families	Christmas Party	Dec 8th 3-6:30pm Be a Greeter Help in Santa's Wonderland Help with Holiday Bingo	Pines	Sign Up RUF Christmas Party
	Adopt a Family at Christmas			Sign Up RUF Adopt a Family
Mission of Yahweh	Christmas on a Mission (Christmas morning party)	12/25/24 @ 7am	MOY	Mission of Yahweh Volunteer Sign Up

Sherwood Christmas



Come help wrap presents!

December 7 | 9:00am | Fellowship Hall



Something exciting is coming back next year.

“Fun and Food with Friends” (formerly known as “Date for Eight”) will begin in February 2025. This event has been a long-standing tradition at Pines usually involving a potluck type of experience with a small group of 6 – 8 people. Sign ups will be right outside Fellowship Hall beginning in December. Look for Chris, Linda or Patsy. If you have any questions please reach out to Linda Aldred, Patsy Jackson, or Chris Wolfe.



Psalm 107:1 - “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever.”

The Preschool spent much of November taking time to notice, appreciate, and thank the kind people in their lives. Many of the students, families and staff participated in the 4th annual Pines Kindness Awards. Over 20 people were nominated for Kindness Awards and honored at Chapel on November 19!



A message from your Staff Committee and Session:

Did you know we have amazing and wonderful employees on the Staff here at Pines? This is month three as we explore a fun way to get to know them a little bit better. If you are familiar with the “’Stro Poll” that comes up on the screen during every Astros game, then you know that they list 4 fun facts about an Astro; you can text in and guess who it is. Along those same lines, we are going to list a few fun facts about staff members and ask you to participate by guessing who you think it might be.

We will continue this month with three more of our staff members.

1. Can you guess who this person is?

He/she loves to travel with their spouse. Favorites include the color pink, Asian food, the book “A Time to Kill”, the movie “Miracle on 34th Street”, and the Bible quote: Philippians 4:13. Their favorite place to visit is anywhere with their spouse. He/she has a couple of tattoos and their favorite part of working at Pines is praying together with the other Staff members. They are most joyful when they are around family and friends. They feel God most in their life early in the mornings when it is peaceful, and they are spending time with Him. A favorite childhood memory includes spending time in Colorado with their grandparents in the summer. He/she loves to fish.

2. Can you guess who this person is?

He/she likes the colors navy blue and green and they love Tex-Mex food. Their favorite places to travel are Round Rock, Texas or Oahu, Hawaii. Not many people know that they are the Assistant Captain for their Directions and Assistance Rodeo Team. They love getting to know the families every day and knowing they are going to work in a place that makes them feel happy and whole. He/she likes to watch their child play water polo and swim, and they like reading. Their favorite quote is “Be the change you wish to see in the world”.

3. Can you guess who this person is?

He/she likes the color blue and they love Italian food. Their favorite place to travel is Tuscany. Not many people know that they had breakfast with Maya Angelou. He/She loves photography and their favorite movies include “Hunt for Red October” and “Shawshank Redemption”. Their favorite book is *The Book of Joy*. They love walking side by side with folks in their faith journey. Their favorite quote is, “I have not come into this world to be served but to serve” spoken by Jesus. A favorite childhood memory is going to baseball games with their father. They feel God most in their life when they are serving and doing mission work and being with their family brings them the most joy.

We will have a specially decorated box near the Sunday Coffee table in the narthex, along with pieces of paper to write your answers. If you think you know the answer(s) please leave them in the marked box, along with your name.

The answers are listed in this newsletter on page 11.

Thank you for participating.
Session/Staff Committee




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

Where: Pines Presbyterian Church
When: January 8, 2025

Life Line Screening is the nation's leader in **Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screenings.**

Trusted by over 10 million customers.

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

Who should attend:

Anyone over the **age of 40**

Special Member Pricing for \$159

- ♥ Carotid Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- ♥ Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- ♥ Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- ♥ Plus a **FREE** Hypertension Screening

4 ways to book your appointment...

Call **888-814-0466** and use
promo code **HSCA001**

Visit  **LLSA.SOCIAL/HSCA**



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.

SPREAD SOME CHRISTMAS CHEER

Need a little something to jumpstart your Christmas spirit? If so, give us just 10 minutes or so after worship on Sunday, December 1. The Mission Committee is hosting an Advent Service Project where we will stuff 100 Christmas bags with candy and a toy. The bags will be given to homeless children served by Montrose Street Reach, one of our Mission partners.

All that's required is that you go to the Fellowship Hall, grab a bag, and fill it with assorted treats & goodies that will be provided by the Missions Committee. If you have any questions, contact Kathy Ropshaw or any Missions committee member.

For more information on Montrose Street Reach see their website at: montrocestreetreach.com



Come out and support the Youth at Pines Presbyterian in raising money for their Annual 2025 Summer Mission Trip with Praying Pelican Missions

Pickles BBQ, an award winning competition team, will do the **cooking for you!!!**

Prime Brisket \$25/lb Rack of Pork Ribs \$30

Sunday Dec. 15 from 1-3 for pickup
Pines Presbyterian
12751 Kimberley Lane, Houston, Tx 77024
Place orders at bit.ly/PinesYouth

Pickles BBQ Recent Accolades
Fort Bend County Fair
 2022 1st Place Brisket
 2023 1st Place Ribs
 2024 5th Place Ribs & 4th Place Brisket
Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo
 2024 9th Place Ribs
Yoakum Tom Tom Festival
 2024 Grand Champion





Thank you to all who participated in the “Get to Know the Staff Better” Poll.

The answers are as follows:

October: Alexis Graham, Laurie Conner

November: Kristin Beall, Connie Pike


December: Cindy Houlihan Workman, Alicia Flick, Pastor Andy Gans



SPACE CITY SOUND
PRESENTS

2024
WINTER SOLSTICE
 AN A CAPPELLA HOLIDAY CONCERT

SCAN HERE FOR TICKETS



DECEMBER 20th | 7PM CST

MATCH
 MIDTOWN ARTS & THEATER CENTER HOUSTON

Trunk or Treat Event



Thanks to everyone for making this a terrific event! Be sure to bring family and friends to the Christmas celebrations!