



PINES

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

December 2019

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

ADVENT & Christmas

DECEMBER

1

*Family Advent Night
& Tree Lighting*
5:00 - 7:00

7

PINES
Christmas Dinner
6:30 - 8:30

14

Sherwood Christmas Store
8:00 - 1:00

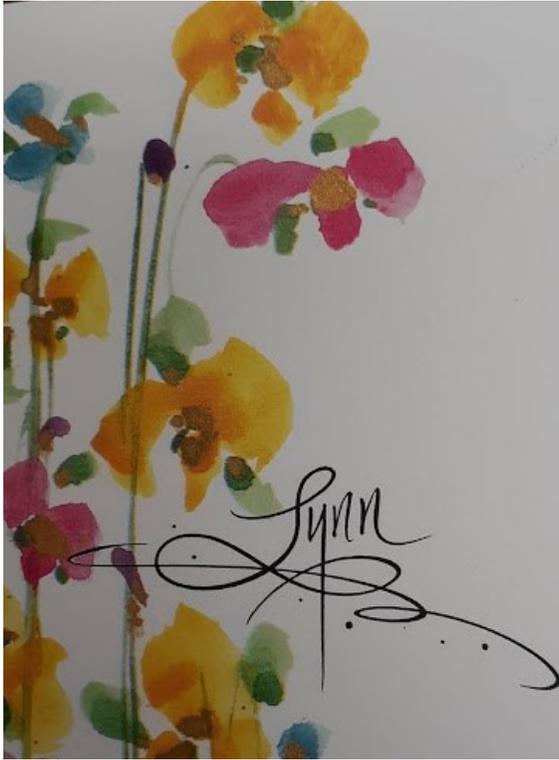
15

CANTATA - A CHOIR PRESENTATION OF
EMMANUEL
Celebrating Heaven's Child
10:45 WORSHIP SERVICE

24

Christmas Eve
WORSHIP SERVICES
5:00, 7:00, 11:00

Pines Family News



Dear Pines Friends,
Our family wishes to thank the Pines Prayer Team and all our friends at Pines for the prayer notes, and words of condolence sent during the illness and recent death of my brother, Jack Lewis. It is certainly a comfort and warm feeling to be the recipient of so many kind thoughts and prayers. Thanks to each and everyone for your thoughtfulness and kindness shown during this difficult time.

Sincerely,
Lynn Stauffacher

thank you

My Dear Church Family, words cannot begin to express the blessings you provided me during my illness. I was admitted into the hospital 3 times for illness, surgery and healing, and truly felt covered in your prayers. The cards, gifts, meals, visits, advice and many prayers are what sustained me through some of the roughest moments I have ever had. Tears come to my eyes now thinking of each of you and how just the thought you were each praying for me gave me hope. Healing is slower than I expected, but I am improving daily. I am so very grateful for each of you. Thank you for being such a loving family of faith. I am easing back into work and ask for your continued prayers and patience as I get back up to speed. God's blessing upon each of you during this Thanksgiving season. I will be lifting each of you up in prayer over Thanksgiving.
Thank you dear friends, Cindy Houlihan

**Please mark your calendars with
the NEWSLETTER DUE DATES:
NOTE EARLY DATE for December:
December 13 (January 2020)**

Pastor's Page

Advent greetings,

It's hard to believe Advent and the Christmas season are already upon us, it seems like we just celebrated Back to Church Sunday. Our worship services over the next several weeks will focus on hope, peace, joy and love, four of the gifts the Messiah brings to you and me. We all come with the hope and anticipation that this season will be filled with peace, joy and love. For some though, they are overcome by a sense of dread. How will I ever get everything done? How many pounds will I gain this year? Will the family get along? The list could go on but, if left unaddressed, these thoughts all lead to the same thing ... stress. The Presbyterian Board of Pensions recently shared tips on ways to manage holiday stress, so you can enjoy the season and appreciate the gift that Christ brings to the world.

As you count the days to Christmas try these six tips to help manage your holiday stress...

1. **Set priorities.** People tend to focus on trying to create perfection this time of the year. Set reasonable goals for what you will do to celebrate. Decide in advance what is most important to you and your family and focus your celebrations around those things.
2. **Don't overschedule.** Downtime is essential to enjoying this special time of the year. Be careful to choose activities based on what you want to do rather than what you think you must do.
3. **Make a plan.** Once you've set your priorities, plan how you will get things done. Make a calendar with important dates on it (the school play, the neighbors' open house, and so on). Carefully plan your menus and do your shopping with a list. You'll be less likely to forget important ingredients and eliminate the last-minute trips to the store that can leave you frazzled.
4. **Keep expectations realistic.** It's not your responsibility to make sure that everyone has a perfect holiday, so don't put that demand on yourself.
5. **Make a budget and keep it.** If gift buying is part of your holiday celebration, decide in advance what you can afford to spend this year, create a budget, and then stick to it. Overspending during the holidays is a major source of stress, so be careful. Remember that gifts cannot buy happiness.
6. **Care for yourself and your family.** During the holidays, people tend to neglect doing those things that reduce stress. For instance, you may overindulge in food and drink and leave exercise out of your daily life. Make it a goal to change that this holiday season. Make healthy choices about the types and amounts of foods you eat. Get outside for a brisk walk and take the kids.

I love this list, but I'd like to add two of my own. Pray, find time to pray and talk to God. Share your joys and concerns, your worries, your hopes and your dreams. As you pray make sure you listen. Which leads me to my second tip, make time to be in relationship with the one whom we are celebrating. Read scripture, do your best to find a quiet place so you can escape the noise of the season and listen for the voice of the reason for the season.

My prayer is that we all have a season filled with hope, peace, joy and love as we gather to worship and celebrate the Newborn King.

Praying for a stress-free, Spirit filled season,



Staff Spotlight | Ashley Sullivan



Over the past several months you have had the opportunity to meet your staff here at Pines through these Staff Spotlights. They have given you insight to each staff member in hopes that when you see them you have an opportunity to talk with them about their life and their position here at Pines. This month is a little different. This month you will get to know a little bit about our Children's Ministry Director, Ashley Sullivan, but you'll also get to say goodbye to her. As many of you know Ashley is stepping down to be able to spend more time at home and take care of her family's needs. We will miss Ashley's Spirit-filled personality, her love of our children and her passion for Jesus Christ.

Ashley has only been with us for a year and a half, but in that short time she has done so many great things with our Children's Ministry. Ashley's "no problem" attitude allowed us to grow VBS to numbers we haven't seen in a long time. Her creativity and desire to reach the littlest allowed us to start Parents Night Out which consistently brought over twenty children into our church doors. Sunday School, Children's Church and Children's Messages all were impacted by her knowledge of scripture and love of Christ. Ashley has often said that one of her greatest joys in life is to help students discover more of who Jesus is, how much He loves them, and why He's worth following.

Ashley has encouraged many of us in our faith journey. She's able to be such an encourager because of her faith, and because of each of you. Ashley has said how much she has loved every moment of her position at Pines. She has said it has been one of the great privileges of her life to get to know and love the people of Pines... and that she can't imagine a more beautiful example of a family of faith anywhere!

When asked what her greatest joy has been being the Children's Ministry Director here at Pines Ashley responded, "Getting to be a part of children's faith journeys. It's an incredible thing to get to play a small part in a child's heart opening to the good news of Jesus." That joy is evident, and we are thankful she has helped form a small part of our Children's faith. I hope you will be able to say "thank you" to Ashley and her family before she leaves us on December 20th.

Youth Happenings!

Bake Sale December 15th!

The annual Youth Ministry Bake Sale will be on December 15th, before and after worship. This fundraiser will support the mission of the youth ministry for 2020.

We are looking for volunteers to donate baked goods.

Those interested in helping out can contact Jesse at jesse@pinespc.org!

Children's Ministry



O Holy Night

Family Advent Night & Tree Lighting
When: December 1, 5:00-7:00 PM

If your children can join us for the evening, please contact Ashley Sullivan at 713-855-1304 or at Ashley@pinespc.org.

The Music Department

Greetings from the Music Department!

This month we take a look at one of the most beloved Christmas Carols of all time. Here is how this hymn came to be.

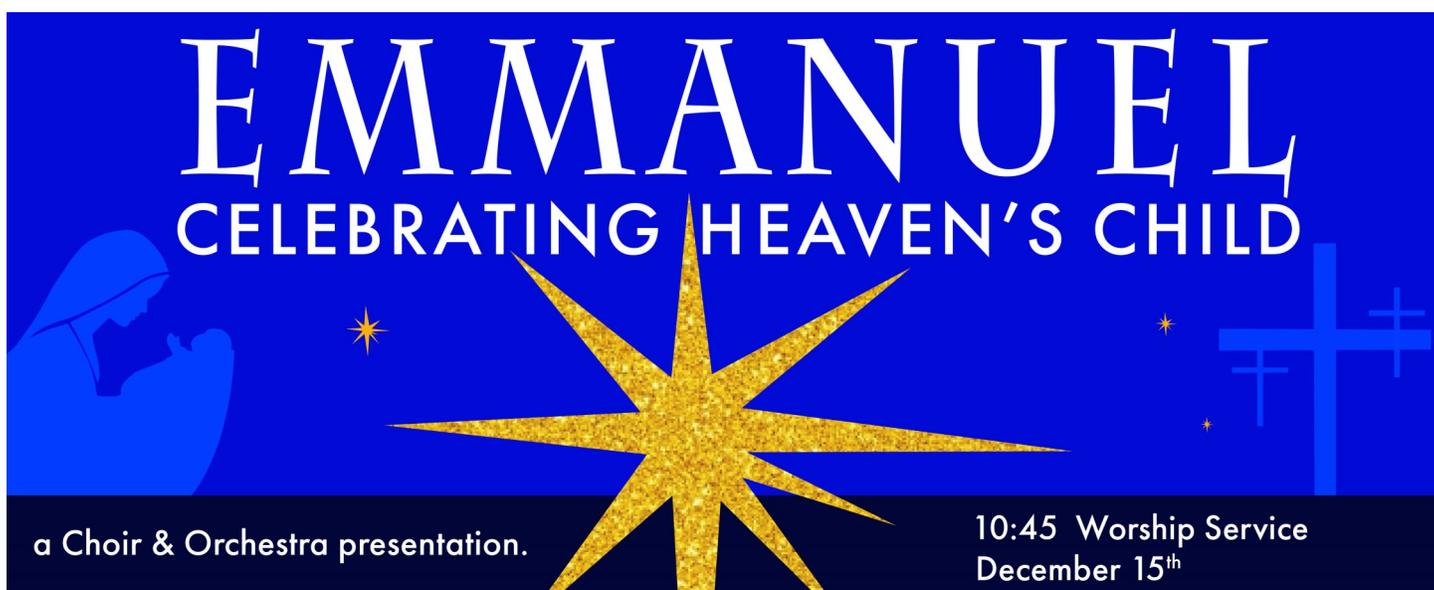
“Silent Night” was first performed on Christmas Eve 1818 at St. Nicholas parish church in Oberndorf, a village in present day Austria. A young priest, Father Joseph Mohr, had come to Oberndorf the year before. He had written the lyrics of the song “Stille Nacht” in 1816 at Mariapfarr, the hometown of his father.

The melody was composed by Franz Gruber, schoolmaster and organist in the nearby village of Arnsdorf. Before Christmas Eve, Mohr brought the words to Gruber and asked him to compose a melody and guitar accompaniment for the Christmas Eve mass, after river flooding had damaged the church organ. The church was eventually destroyed by repeated flooding and replaced with the Silent-Night-Chapel. It is unknown what inspired Mohr to write the lyrics, or what prompted him to create a new carol.

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright!
‘Round yon virgin Mother and Child, Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

May the joy born in a manger always be cradled in your heart.

Tim



EMMANUEL
CELEBRATING HEAVEN'S CHILD

a Choir & Orchestra presentation.

10:45 Worship Service
December 15th

Please join the Pines Music Department December 15th at 10:45 a.m. for the presentation of “Emmanuel, Celebrating Heaven’s Child” during the worship service. We will feature the Chancel Choir, the Men’s Chorale, and the Pines Orchestra in this delightful Christmas Cantata, including Christmas carols new and old. You will be blessed by this wonderful story of the birth of Christ in song. Come share the joy!

Done with small talk?

Try Alpha

January 9 - April 2

Thursday Evenings | 6:30 to 8:00pm



You're invited!

Alpha is a chance to explore life and the Christian faith in a friendly, open and informal environment.

For more info contact:

Barbara
713 467 2234 or
barbara@pinespc.org

Join Us

**for a FREE MEAL
& GREAT CONVERSATION.**

PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PinesPC.org



LEARNING THROUGH PLAY!



Pines Presbyterian
PRESCHOOL



We have had a wonderful fall at the Preschool. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas!

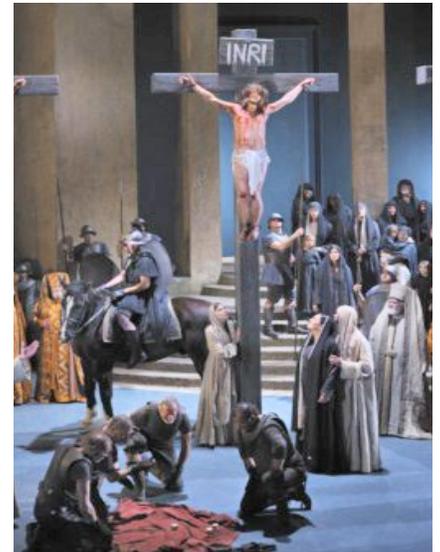
Watch Worship Online

Have you ever missed a Sunday and wished you could see and hear what you missed, or wanted to hear it again, or wanted to share the service with a friend? Beginning later this month Pines will be posting on our website each weeks complete worship service. You will be able to see the previous Sunday's service as well as a few months' worth of previous services. The recorded services will be under the "Worship/Music" tab on our web site. In an effort to maintain the safety and security of our children, the Session and Worship committee agreed, the camera recording the service will pan up to the Sanctuary cross during the Children's Message.

Oberammergau

"Spots available!"

Join your Pines family as we travel to Prague, Budapest, Vienna, and southern Germany **June 3rd, 2020**. While on this journey we will experience the centuries old, world famous Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany. This Passion Play is only held every 10 years so tickets are limited. For more information and to sign up check out the following link: <http://pinespc.org/trip-to-easterneurope/>



Time to Hang the Greens!



On Saturday, Nov. 30th, from 9 a.m. to noon, the Worship Committee will be decorating Pines for Advent. The congregation is warmly invited to lend a helping hand. There will be many things to do, such as hanging greens, decorating trees, assembling a Nativity scene, and so much more. Your time is greatly appreciated – every hand helps. It's a wonderful way to start the Advent season and there will be refreshments! We hope to see you there.

Session Meeting Notes

The Session met for its regular Stated meeting on November 25. Here are some highlights:

- Received a report from the commissioners to the recent meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant.
- Approved a motion to elect Karen MacAllister to the position of Interim Treasurer.
- Gave thanks for Cindy's return to work; discussed the path forward for custodial work.
- Received a positive update on volunteer recruitment for the upcoming Alpha program.
- Received a positive budget update for YTD 2019.

- Dan Schafer, Clerk of Session

TRAINING FOR CAREGIVERS

In addition to providing personal care and support for those facing difficult challenges in their lives, the Stephen Ministers at Pines collectively try to sponsor continuing education programs on various topics of interest. Recent examples include four sessions on Grieving which were facilitated by Rev. Bill Willis and several sessions on dealing with the trauma associated with the aftermath from Hurricane Harvey.

Through this article we wanted to inform you of a training program being conducted by Amazing Place, a local organization which sponsors a dementia day care program, caregiver support and community education. The Savvy Caregiver Program (SCP) is a **FREE** six-week, 12-hour training program for caregivers of those with dementia. It is based on the fact that family members who become caregivers assume the role because of the relationship, not because they are trained to do it. It supplies the knowledge and skills to be a successful caregiver with as much reward and as little distress as possible.

SCP involves active, involved learning, independent practice of strategies at home and interactive coaching in the classes to help caregivers achieve an optimum daily life environment. It also addresses the tremendous amount of stress the caregivers experience. It teaches strengthening of mediating factors such as self-care, knowledge, skills, outlook and resources, allowing caregiving situations to become more positive.

The training classes will be conducted at a number of churches in the January – April 2020 period. If you are interested in participating, please contact either Barbara Retzloff or Phil Wetz for additional details.

Phil Wetz



December 8 & 15 10:15am - 10:45am & 11:45am - 12:30pm Fellowship Area

Once again we're offering our Alternative Gift Christmas Market to include Brookwood Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services, the New Life School, Feed My Starving Children, Vida Pancakes (The Rundle's ministry) and the Pines Knitters items.

The Market will be on Dec 8 and Dec 15, before and after worship service. There will be representatives from Brookwood, Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services, The New Life School, Feed My Starving Children, Vida Pancakes and The Pines Needles, offering cards and goods you may purchase with a donation. Your financial gift may be in honor or memory of someone special or simply because you want to spread the love of the season. Be assured that your contribution is helping a worthy Mission Partner and you get a card describing your gift and the good works it supports. Toshi and the Stitch Ministry will be there selling their beautiful scarves, caps, booties and other knitted wares. Is there a better way to honor the true spirit of Christmas than by buying an angel made from a box of donated food?

The Missions Committee hopes you will support our Alternative Christmas Market. We want to offer a way to support "the least of these" with meaningful gifts in celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Please stop by the tables in the **Fellowship Hallway on Dec. 8 and Dec. 15. from 10:15am – 10:45am and 11:45am – 12:30pm.** Donations may be payable directly to the charity or to Pines, or by a contribution to the offering plate in any December worship service. If giving by check in the offering plate, please make the check payable to Pines with a notation designating Agape and the charity of your choice... This month we're asking for financial contributions to any of our Alternative Christmas Market participants. For info contact Margaret Schafer at ga.schafers@comcast.net. Reminder... This Holiday Season do your regular Amazon shopping at [smile.amazon.com/ ch/74-1460644](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/74-1460644) and AmazonSmile donates to Pines Presbyterian Church.

HOME FOR Christmas



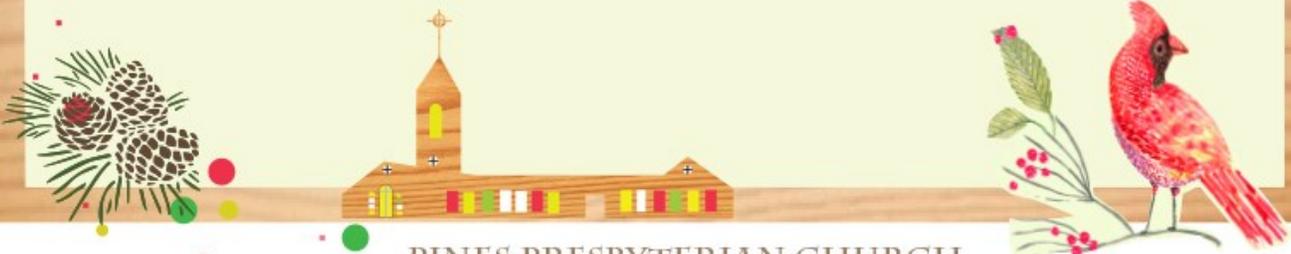
Join us for the annual

Pines Christmas Dinner

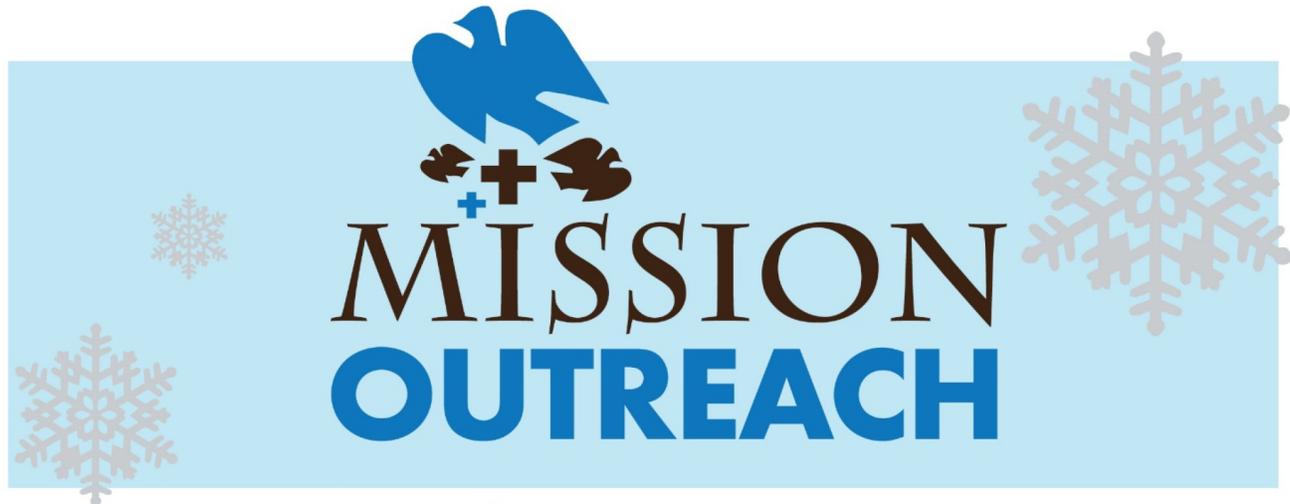
DECEMBER 7TH

Appetizers in the narthex at 6:30
followed by dinner and dessert in the fellowship hall.

* Childcare is available by reservation.



PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



DECEMBER Volunteer Opportunities

Sunday, 12/1: Beginning at 9am in the Fellowship volunteers are needed to fill 124 food bags for the Mission of Yahweh, 40 food baskets for Raise Up Families and 66 Christmas treat bags for Spring Branch Blessing in a Backpack. *(Kari Work is the contact)

Saturday, 12/7: 6am to 8am in the Kitchen volunteers are needed to cook and assemble tacos with the Taco and A Prayer team for the City Center Rudolph Run. ***(Margaret Schafer is the contact)

Sunday, 12/8: Volunteers are needed to help transport 40 food baskets from Pines to MDUMC for the Raise Up Families Christmas Party. Baskets will be delivered following services. *(Kari is the contact)

Saturday, 12/14: Sherwood Christmas Store – 1700 Sherwood Forest in the Gym. 8:30am to 1:00pm. Volunteers needed to help unload toys and bikes and set up the Christmas Store. Gift wrappers and shopping assists are needed beginning at 9am. *(Kari is the contact)

Thursday, 12/19: Sherwood Elementary is hosting its annual ***Readathon*** from 8:00am to 1:00pm. We would love to have you join in on the celebration and read to students on this day for 15 – 30 minutes. You are welcome to bring a special book or just pick on that we have here at Sherwood. Please email monica.jerez2@springbranchisd.com if you are interested and let her know what time you are available.

*Kari Work: 713-818-1140 or kwork@mgcinc.net

**Margaret Schafer: 404-625-8152 or ga.schafers@comcast.net

Coming up Soon...

Do you have high cholesterol or high blood pressure?

LIFE LINE  SCREENING®

is coming is to Pines
December 4, 2019

GET SCREENED > CALL 1-877-380-1743 OR VISIT LIFELINESCREENING.COM/COMMUNITYCIRCLE

a Wellness Package (includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening).
All 5 screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete.

[You can also call the church office or sign up in the fellowship Hall.]

PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WE ARE COMING TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD FOR ONE DAY

The screenings offer a 5 test package to thoroughly check you for risk of stroke, cardiovascular disease and other chronic conditions. The combination of these test help detect problems – before you have symptoms and while your doctor can still take action .. so you can keep doing the things you love. ***Pre-registration is required***



Space City Sound

A COSMIC CHRISTMAS

2 Performances

December 14th

6:30 p.m.

Westchester Academy

901 Yorkchester Dr.
Houston, TX 77079

December 15th

2:00 p.m.

Pines Presbyterian Church

12751 Kimberley Ln.
Houston, TX 77024

Tickets

\$20 Adults, **\$15** Students or Educators

Purchase tickets at: tinyurl.com/spacecitytickets



Featured Quartets

Rhapsody, Please Stand Clear of the Doors...
and possibly more!



SPACE CITY SOUND

Acappella

spacecitysound.org

facebook: SpaceCitySound

Stewardship



Growing into the Future...

we have had a good response to our Stewardship campaign so far. Through 11/18/2019, \$563,120 has been pledged from 77 families. This is comparable to where we were at this same time last year. By returning your pledge card in the collection plate or to the church office, you insure that Pines can plan for 2020 with the same level of activities, outreach, education and mission.

Income/Expense Report as of 10/31/2019

