



PINES

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

December 2020

Looking Upward, Growing Inward, and Serving



Christmas Eve Services

4:00 pm on our Back Parking Lot
(in your car or bring a chair)

or

6:30 pm in the Sanctuary
(Communion and Candlelight Service)

Pines Family News & Current Events



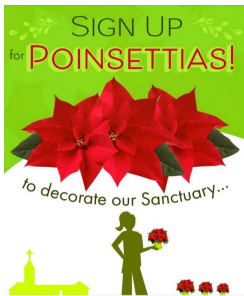
Please hold Gloria Anderson, son Mike, and daughter and son in law Barbara and Larry Greenlee in your prayers in the loss of husband and father Jim Anderson. Jim was a long time member of Pines. He loved Pines and it's people. Jim spent many, many hours taking care of our church. He built many of the wood items in our sanctuary and elsewhere in the building with his own hands. Jim will be missed by all, but there is strength and hope in knowing he is with our Father in heaven.



To our friends at Pines, What a blessing and pleasure it was to be with you, our dear friends for the service of celebration of Harry Loose on October 24, 2020 in the sanctuary and at the reception following outside in the playground. Our hearts are filled with thanksgiving to God and to all who took part in the planning and presentation of this tribute. We also appreciate your caring in so many ways, through your attendance at the church or by streaming, many thoughtful cards, notes and phone calls. We appreciate your support and encouragement very much at this time and always. With prayers and love, Eleanor Loose and family



Phil & Linda Johnson are grandparents again!!! This makes number 3 in 2020! Annie Catlett Johnson was born on November 10, 2020 in Austin at 2:14am. Annie weighed 7 lbs. 3 oz. Mom and dad are doing well along with grandma and grandpa. Please join us in congratulating the new parents and grandparents.



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 \$11.00. You can either sign up in the hallway outside of the Fellowship Hall before the service on Sunday mornings through December 6th 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 24th. Linda Aldred lindaaldred1@aol.com or Melissa Gravett mgravett@sbcglobal.net or call the church office.



David and Beth Sibley are grandparents again!!! Harper Hart Sibley was born in Houston on November 14, 2020. Parents, Jackie & Stephen and big sister Hadley were excited to welcome her home. All are doing well! Please join us in congratulating the new parents and grandparents.

Do you get our weekly prayer list? If not, please call Genny in the church office at 713-467-2234 to get on the list. Genny can also help you get signed up to receive our newsletter, 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!

Please mark your calendars with
the NEWSLETTER DUE DATES:
December 18 (for January 2021 issue)

Happy Advent in the name of the One who is to come,

I am sure you are probably tired of hearing, and knowing, how things are different this year. We're tired that we can't gather the way we like to, tired that we can't shop, eat out or eat in with others. I think we're also tired of being worried. We worry about masks, when a vaccine will be available; will I, or one of my friends or family members get sick. It seems that since COVID struck our emotions have been on edge and we're just not acting like ourselves.

We often ask the question, "what is it going to take to get back to 'normal'." Who knows what normal is or will be in 2021? I don't, but what I do know is that this season of Advent points us to the One who does know our future, the One who offers hope when things seem dim, has faith in us even when our faith wanes, offers us joy so deeply rooted that even the darkest days seem bright, the One who helps us find peace in our most violent storms, and loves us unconditionally. This is what Emmanuel, God with us, offers each one of us every moment of our lives. Scripture has never told us that God only loves us part of the time. We are reminded time and time again that we believe in a God who chases after us, even in our darkest days. God's faith and love for us, and the peace God offers us is not based on how we gather for the holidays, or if we'll have real candles for Christmas Eve services. God's immeasurable love for us is seen through the one whom we prepare to greet on Christmas morning.

As you walk this very weird journey through the season of Advent this year, I encourage you to look for the blessings... even when times seem tough. There is a wonderful Christian song by Laura Story called "Blessings". The song talks about finding blessings in the difficult times of life. A portion of the song says,

"Cause what if your blessings come through raindrops
What if Your healing comes through tears
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near
What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise."

Through this rainstorm of a year I encourage you to keep looking for the blessings in our midst, blessings that remind us that God is not only near but is with us as well in the one whom we call Emanuel.

With Advent hope and blessings,



Pines In-car-nation



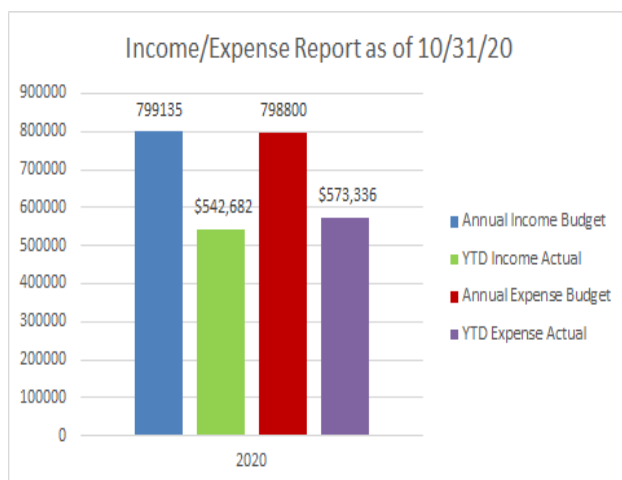
**Join us Sunday at 5 PM
December 6, 13 & 20 on
our back parking lot for
*In-Car-Nation!***

Bring your family...bring your friends...bring a chair, or sit in your vehicle...all as you tune into the service on your car radio! Don't miss this wonderful Worship opportunity!



Stewardship

Thank you to all who participated in Taco and a Pledge Sunday! We enjoyed terrific breakfast tacos and received 2021 pledges from just over 1/2 (55%) of the members who made pledges for 2020. This is good news... but we still need to hear from more members. If you were unable to attend last Sunday it's not too late to return your 2021 pledge information by returning the card you received in the mail, downloading a pledge card from the Pines website to return or simply sending an email with your pledge to our accounting manager, Alexis Graham, at alexis@pinespc.org. Pines needs your financial support to move Forward Together in Faith.



Stewardship Notes:

1. Pledge income is running behind through 10 months (72% received, vs 83% expected.) It is normal to expect some catch up in the last two months of the year. Overall income is also running behind (68% received, vs 83% expected.) The additional underage is due to non-pledge income running well below prior years experience due to Covid shut down.
2. Expenses are also running below budget year to date, 72% spent vs 83% budgeted through October, due to fewer activities and careful monitoring of costs by committees.
3. The Net Loss through October 31 is (\$30,654).
4. Pines received a Cares Act PPP Loan of \$58,295. We have applied for and expect to receive forgiveness of this loan, which will allow the proceeds to be used to offset the net operating loss.



Christ caring for people through people

**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND BLESSINGS TO ALL
FROM YOUR STEPHEN MINISTRY GROUP**

Not sure many know that Pines members and their families who have lost loved one's are prayed for each month for a year. Your Stephen Ministers are always in prayer for all care receivers or anyone that needs prayers or a Stephen Minister.

Please contact Rev. Bill Willis at bill.00.willis@gmail.com or call the church office.

Matthew 18:20 "when two or more are gathered in my name, there am I one with them."

Youth Happenings

“Youth Group and In-Car-Nation”

Students are encouraged to meet in the Pines back parking lot at 4:00pm to hang out and have a devotional before the In-Car-Nation Worship Service starts at 5:00pm! Bring a camp chair, dress comfortably, and enjoy the cool breeze while we get ready for our contemporary worship service here at Pines!



Advent Sunday School – Adults and Children’s Family-Style class

Children & Adults will be working their way through different parts of the Advent story during Sunday school in December!

Interactive Advent Living Rooms on the Pines Kids Website!

A new interactive living room will be posted each week of Advent on the kids’ portion of our website for you to enjoy stories, recipes, crafts, adventures, and music!

See if you can notice how the room changes each week!

This delightful virtual opportunity was shared with us by the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Ber-

**NO Sunday School
on December 27**

muda.

Make sure you are keeping up with the Pines Children’s Ministry Facebook and receiving Pastor Cindy’s weekly emails for more fun this month!

The Music Department

Greetings from the Music Department!

As we approach the Christmas season this year, my mind goes to the Austrian carol "Still, Still, Still." My mind focuses on the babe in the manger, sleeping so quietly and peacefully. As Mary and Joseph watch over the child, with barnyard animals near, the babe simply sleeps. Deep, peaceful sleep.

"Still, still, still, He sleeps this night so chill!
The Virgin's tender arms enfolding,
Warm and safe the Child are holding.
Still, still, still, He sleeps this night so chill.

Sleep, sleep, sleep, He lies in slumber deep
While angel hosts from heaven come winging,
Sweetest songs of joy are singing.
Sleep, sleep, sleep, He lies in slumber deep."

As our world around us rages, with violence and war, a divided country, hateful speaking becoming the new norm, I look for the never changing peace I receive from this carol. And with this most unusual Christmas, all the hubbub of shopping online, wearing masks, social distancing, and washing our hands, I pray for each of us that we can all hear the angels singing as they did for Christ so long ago, and give us that warm feeling of peace and slumber deep.

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

Tim

Vision and Planning Update

"Vision and Planning Needs Your Input! Communication Surveys were emailed out November 19th to all Pines members with email addresses on file. Your feedback to this survey will help keep you informed as well as improve our communications process. If you did not receive a copy, hardcopies are available in the Adult Education Hallway and can be returned to the Vision and Planning mailbox behind the front desk. LET US HEAR FROM YOU BY NOVEMBER 30th!"

REMINDER: Please, if you move to a new address, change your phone number or your email address, please call or email the church office so that we can update our files. Also, if you feel you are not receiving communications from the church, **please** contact the church office at 713-467-2234! You may also email Cindy or Genny at cindy@pinespc.org or genny@pinespc.org Thank you.

Are you thankful for your pastor? Do you show appreciation and spend time in prayer for them?

97% of pastors have been betrayed
70% of pastors battle depression
80% of pastors feel discouraged
94% of pastor's families feel the
pressure of ministry
78% of pastors have no close friends
90% of pastors work 55-75 hours per week
10% of pastors will retire as a pastor
7,000 churches close each year
1,500 pastors quit each month

PRAY FOR YOUR PASTORS

taken from the monthly Christian Law Assoc newsletter

Missions



Pines meeting the needs at Sherwood once again!

Earlier this week, the Missions Committee was notified of a fund that could be used for Sherwood. Knowing the need for water bottles, the committee coordinated with Bonnie (CIS-SWE) to provide 100 water bottles. The Missions Committee is extremely grateful for the members who made this happen by donating funds for use at SWE.

Sherwood Christmas Store
~ WRAPPING DAY ~
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5TH
[volunteers are needed]
9AM in the FELLOWSHIP HALL

Sherwood Christmas Store Wrapping Day

Saturday, December 5th
9am in the Fellowship Hall

Please let Kari Work know if you plan to attend.
Social distancing will be followed.



Guiding Businesses to Sustained Growth and Strengthening Communities

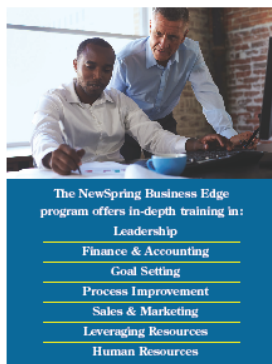
NewSpring Business Edge guides emerging businesses through the process of creating sustainable and profitable growth. Experienced advisors help set measurable business goals, provide a proven framework to support goals and growth, and maintain the momentum with bi-monthly meetings.

Learn about the 2021 program on December 4th at 2:00 PM (CST) at an introductory virtual meeting. The meeting will include a complimentary module of small business training and discussion with Edge advisers, subject matter experts and participants.

At NewSpring Business Edge we believe that through the power of our knowledge, we can help you build a successful business with a defined value statement that contributes to local economic development and strengthens the community.

Register to attend by emailing Angela Cheves at angelacheves@newspringcenter.org.

www.newspringcenter.org/edge
713-590-0100



66 Starting a business is hard. Achieving consistent profitability and positive cash-flow is harder. Sustaining profitable growth and positive cash-flow is hardest."
Jack Barry



Pines has once again been recognized as a Spring Branch ISD Good Neighbor, class of 2020.

The Good Neighbor program celebrates and recognizes our superlative partners for their support of SBISD or the Spring Branch Education Foundation (SBEF). Many of you are longtime Good Neighbors and some of you have earned this designation for the first time. Thank you!

Pines was recognized for the following:

- Raised funds for school supplies for Sherwood Elementary families
- Hosted an annual Christmas Store for parents to purchase gifts for their children
- Provided volunteers to be mentors

We thank *all* of you for your continued support of SBISD - both in usual times and these unusual times! If we can support you in any way, please let us know.

With gratitude,
Abby, Katie & the Community Relations Team

2020 ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET

You may recall the Alternative Christmas Market of years past when our hallways were filled with Mission Partners offering alternative gifts as well as baked goods, unique international gifts, and beautiful, handcrafted treasures. This event has turned into a joyous day where we could get to know some of the worthy organizations the Missions Committee supports, all while knocking out our Christmas list! But this being 2020, you know what's coming – the Alternative Christmas Market will NOT be held this year due to, you know what's coming – COVID 19. But you can still make donations and purchase alternative gifts from our Mission Partners by going directly to their website.

OR

You may make a donation to Pines with a note telling us what organization you're supporting and Pines will forward the funds on your behalf.

Here's the list of Mission Partners supported by Pines in 2020. Your generous pledges and offerings allow Pines to financially support these friends. We encourage you to personally shop their websites to get your Alternative Christmas gifts this year.

We'll see you back in the hallway in 2021.

Give, and it will be given to you. Luke 6:38

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Presbyterian Children's Home & Services
Presbyterian Church USA Mission
Faith in Practice
Mission of Yahweh
Interfaith Ministries
Fairhaven Food Pantry
CanCare
Memorial Assistance Ministries
Raise Up Families
The Women's Home
Brookwood
Communities in Schools (Sherwood Elem)
Nueva Vida (formerly New Life School)
Freedom Place, Arrow Ministries
NewSpring
C.E.N.T.E.R. Ministries
The Restoration Team
Feed My Starving Children
Montrose Street Reach

<https://www.austinseminary.edu/support>
pchas.org
<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/>
faithinpractice.org
<https://missionofyahweh.org/>
imgh.org
713-468-3276
<https://cancare.org/>
www.mamhouston.org
raiseupfamilies.org
<https://www.thewomenshome.org/>
brookwoodcommunity.org
www.cishouston.org
nuevavidaguatemala.org
arrow.org
<https://newspringcenter.org/>
center-ministries.org
[https://www.therestorationteam.org/](https://www therestorationteam.org/)
www.fmssc.org
montrosetstreetreach.com

Thanks for your faithful giving.
Pines Missions Committee

Merry Christmas!

Pines address: 12751 Kimberley Lane, Houston Texas 77024. Our phone number is: 713-467-2234.