



PINES

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

March 2020

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



Thank
You
Barbara



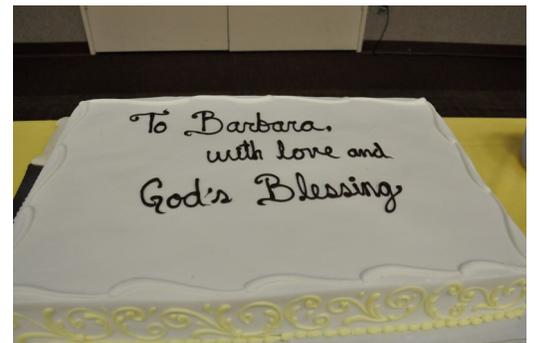
My Dear Friends,

My last Sunday was such a special day in so many ways. From your presence in worship to the wonderful reception to the beautiful notes and gifts, I will cherish every part of my last day with you. I am so thankful to have had these thirty plus years with the Pines family. As I pondered the day, I realized I have shared something with each of you... whether we raised our kids together here, were in Sunday School or Bible Study or a small group, served on a committee or session, wept together with the loss of a loved one or rejoiced in times of celebration, in memorial services and weddings and baptisms, and more. God has blessed me deeply with the gift of sharing life and faith with this family. Steve and I will both miss you tremendously. Thank you for the love and grace you have poured into our lives and into the lives of our family.

We love you all!

In Christ,

Barbara & Steve



Pines Family News



Anthony and Emily Gairo are the proud grandparents of Michael Noel Gairo who was born on Born 2-12-2020 at 2:14am; 7 pounds, 6 ounces; 19 1/2 inches long. Joins big sister (2yrs) Natalie Grace. Everyone is healthy and gorgeous!



Dustin and Jessica Priemer are the proud parents of two lovely babies... who were born Monday February 17 at 5:35 and 5:37, a girl named **Mary Alice** and a **Daniel Ray**, weighing in at 3lbs 1oz and 2lbs 10oz respectively. Both are doing well as are Jessica and Dustin, and **big sister Josie** is beaming with happiness. And a hearty congratulation to grandparents Bob and Ann Lewis.



Congratulations to Bob & Lynda Barr on the birth of their great granddaughter Addison McCormic. Addison was born February 18th. She is the **daughter of Brandon & Alicia McCormick.**



We need you! Loving grownups to watch over our little ones from birth to 4 years old on Sunday mornings from 9 to 12. If you could commit to once per month, it would be much appreciated. Or you could substitute, all are welcome. You will need a background check and will need to take a Protect My Child test online. Talk to Melissa or Cindy for more details. No worries, you do not need experience. We will have a lead teacher in the nursery with you. You will get plenty of hugs and laughter from our little ones!

The CE Committee...

is planning an Easter-themed Parents Night Out on Friday, April 3, from 6:00-8:30 pm.

The number of children we can serve will depend on the number of volunteers we can recruit. Please let Margaret Schafer know if you are available/willing to help us with this wonderful outreach to our families. Also, if there is anyone you know who might be willing to help (and has taken/is willing to take the Protect My Ministry training), please pass this information along to them. Thank you in advance!

Dinner for 8 (formerly Date for 8)

Yes, Dinner for 8 is back and it is time to sign up! This is a wonderful way to gather for a meal and fellowship in Pines' members' homes. Sign-ups take place in February and the hosts/hostesses will contact their guests to schedule lunches or dinners for their group. What a fun way to get together to eat a meal and to meet friends!

Questions? Contact Lynda & Bob Barr

Columbarium Committee – If you are interested in serving on the Columbarium Committee, please contact Connie Sipp at csipper@gmail.com. This is a one-year commitment and the business/discussions are conducted via e-mail when appropriate. If an in-person meeting is necessary, it is held after church on a Sunday and does not last more than 30 minutes.

**Please mark your calendars with
the NEWSLETTER DUE DATES:
March 20 (for April 2020 issue)
April 17 (for May 2020 issue)**

Pastor's Page

Greetings in the name of Christ Jesus,

Lent has begun and we begin our journey to the cross of Easter. Our journey to the cross will be a long forty days filled with exciting times and challenging times. Lent is a time for us to reflect on whose we are and to seek ways to draw closer to Christ and our faith in him.

You have heard it said many times that you should “give something up for Lent.” Giving something up represents a sacrifice in our lives, although I’m not sure Jesus thinks giving up sweets is a huge sacrifice. We’ve also heard it said we should take on a spiritual practice during Lent. By taking on a new spiritual practice we deepen our faith and we draw closer to the one who loves us beyond all understanding.

As I thought about these two options for Lent, I was drawn back to our scripture from Transfiguration Sunday. Our Matthew text spoke of Jesus taking a small group of Disciples up the mountain and Jesus was transformed, his face shone like the sun and God spoke out of a bright cloud. All of this taking place right before the stunned Disciples. The Disciples reaction to God’s voice coming from the bright cloud was to fall to the ground in fear. The Exodus text spoke of Moses being instructed by God to go up the mountain and when the glory of the Lord appeared it was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain.

Both scriptures speak of extremely bright light when speaking of the presence of God. Bright light draws our attention away from everything else. Bright light is stunning as it illuminates the darkness. It is the bright light of Christ that draws our attention to Him as it illuminates the darkness in our lives. I wonder, though, how often we look up to the bright, illuminating cross of Christ? In the Matthew text the Disciples fall in fear because of what they experience. I wonder how often we fall in fear when we turn our eyes away and don’t look up to the cross of Christ?

Fear is one of the great debilitating emotions in our world. Fear would have you not look to the Light. Fear would, and will, cause you not to believe Christ’s love for you. There is a great song by Zach Williams called “Fear Is a Liar.” This song speaks to the power we allow fear to have over our lives when we forget to look up to the cross and the love that was displayed there so many years ago for you and me. Here are the words to the chorus:

*Fear he is a liar
He will take your breath
Stop you in your steps
Fear he is a liar
He will rob your rest
Steal your happiness
Cast your fear in the fire
'Cause fear he is a liar*

Friends, whatever your fear may be don’t let it take your eyes from looking up to the one who shines a fear devouring light on you and the world. This Lenten season may you draw even closer to the Light of the world and allow His light to wipe out those dark places in your life.

Standing in His light,



Service Beyond The Walls

How are you active and serving in God's Kingdom? Send your thoughts to cindy@pinespc.org.

REMEMBERING AND GIVING THANKS

After church one Sunday in January, I had the opportunity to thank one of our long-time church members for the countless hours of service he has graciously offered to this congregation. While this person does not seek recognition, I believe he appreciated being remembered and thanked. Later in the week, I reflected on that conversation and thought how nice it would be to have similar conversations with everyone who has been part of the Pines family for at least 20 years (Linda and I are only approaching 15 years).

Since the early part of this year has been a busy time for our family, I did not act on my idea and "shelved" it until I heard item #4 in Barbara's February 9th sermon about the "top ten things that God has taught [her] about ministry, life and Pines". In that portion of her sermon, Barbara said:

***Remembering** is essential. If these walls could talk...we would hear the voices of so many faithful ones over the years who poured their heart and soul, time and money into Pines to make it what it is. They were ones who loved the Lord, and their wisdom and caring spirits have helped to shape us. Remembering them ...their commitment, sacrifices, vision and faith are part of being Pines.*

While Barbara's comments were directed at those saints who have gone to their eternal home, we have the opportunity to personally thank in person many of the Pines saints who have served and sacrificed with their time, talents and treasures for decades to build a church family which "newbies" like me were able to immediately enjoy and benefit from the moment we first visited. Over the years, this church family has cared and supported me during my journey through the valleys of life and celebrated with me on the mountaintops. They have given me opportunities to serve, learn, enjoy fellowship and grow in the process of doing so.

By the time you read this, we will have begun Lent. For those of you who choose to focus on improving an area of your spiritual life during this special time of year, could I suggest that you set a goal of thanking some of the saints in the Pines family for their many years of service because their efforts have been a **PRICELESS** gift to all of us? If you need some suggestions of people to thank (and some of the contributions they have made), please contact me as it would bring me joy to share some of my observations.

Finally, if you do convey gratitude with someone and are willing to share your story, I would consider it an honor to hear it. Thanks be to God for the gifts embodied in the lives of those He brings into our lives.

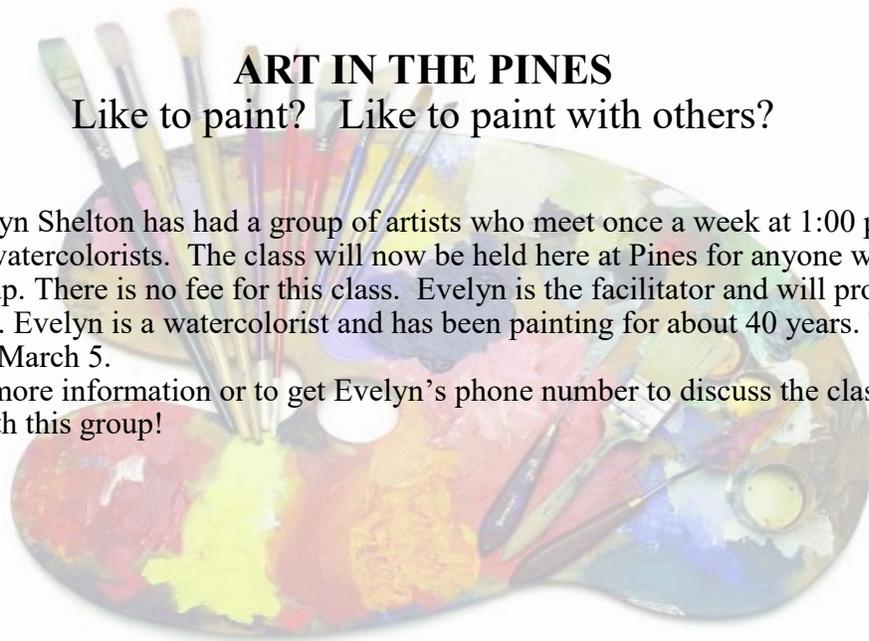
Phil Wetz

ART IN THE PINES

Like to paint? Like to paint with others?

For several years Evelyn Shelton has had a group of artists who meet once a week at 1:00 pm on Thursday afternoons. They are watercolorists. The class will now be held here at Pines for anyone who would like to paint and join the group. There is no fee for this class. Evelyn is the facilitator and will provide suggestions and help when needed. Evelyn is a watercolorist and has been painting for about 40 years. The first Art in the Pines meeting will be March 5.

Please call Cindy for more information or to get Evelyn's phone number to discuss the class. We would love to have you join in with this group!



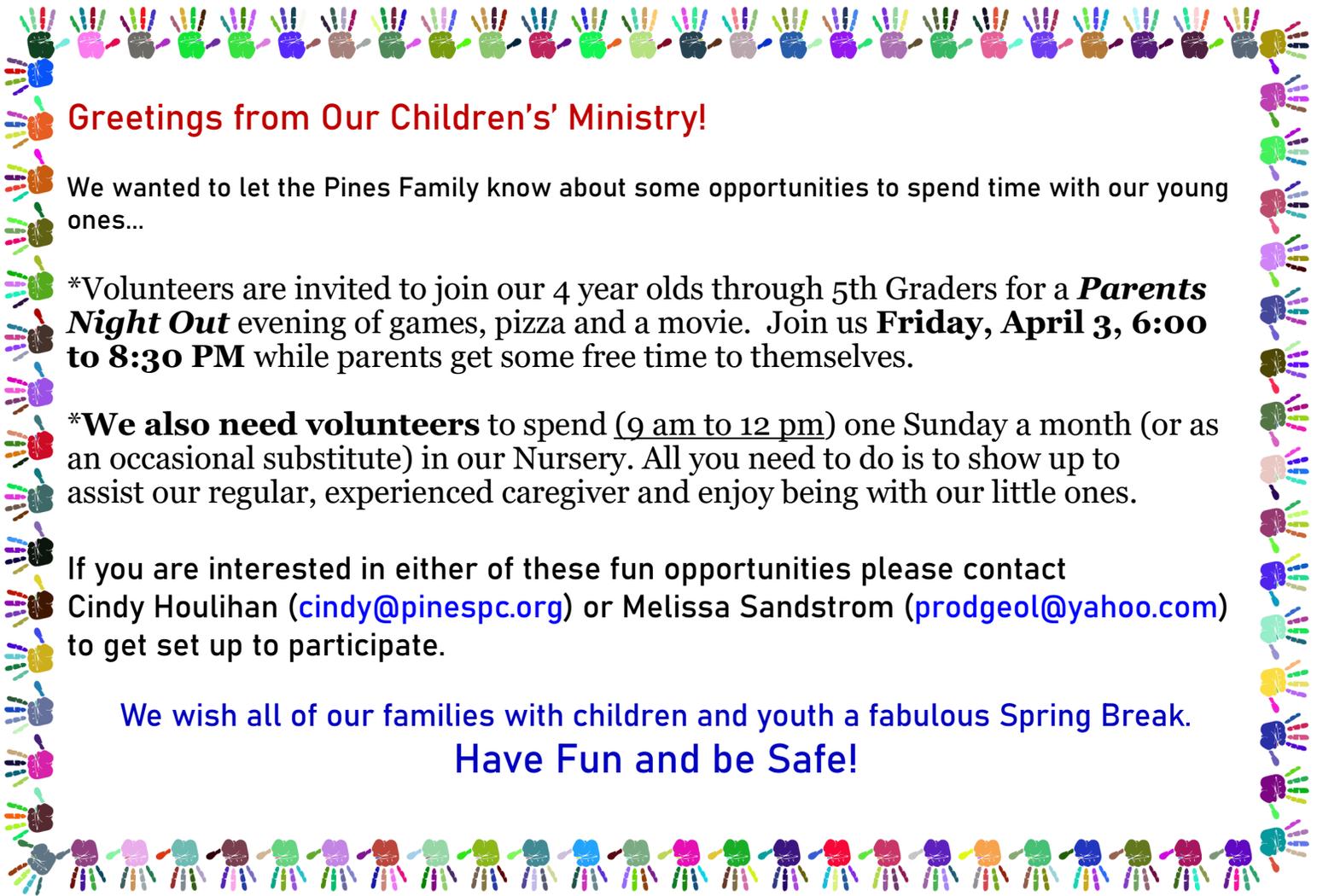
Youth Happenings

Mission Trip Registration Ends this Month!

This Summer, Middle School and High School students are invited to join us as we travel to Memphis, Tennessee from June 7th – 13th to work with Memphis Youth Mission! We'll be joining other churches within our Presbytery to travel, serve, and worship together.

The cost of the trip is \$250. Those interested in registering should get in contact with Jesse at jesse@pinespc.org or by calling the church office!

Children's Ministry



Greetings from Our Children's' Ministry!

We wanted to let the Pines Family know about some opportunities to spend time with our young ones...

*Volunteers are invited to join our 4 year olds through 5th Graders for a **Parents Night Out** evening of games, pizza and a movie. Join us **Friday, April 3, 6:00 to 8:30 PM** while parents get some free time to themselves.

***We also need volunteers** to spend (9 am to 12 pm) one Sunday a month (or as an occasional substitute) in our Nursery. All you need to do is to show up to assist our regular, experienced caregiver and enjoy being with our little ones.

If you are interested in either of these fun opportunities please contact Cindy Houlihan (cindy@pinespc.org) or Melissa Sandstrom (prodgeol@yahoo.com) to get set up to participate.

We wish all of our families with children and youth a fabulous Spring Break.
Have Fun and be Safe!

The Music Department

Greetings from the Music Department!

As we approach the Lenten season, Good Friday, and Christ's resurrection on Easter, let's take a look at a hymn that focuses on the season....."In the Cross of Christ I Glory."

John Bowring is the composer of this wonderful hymn. John was an Englishman who had a special gift for languages. It is said that he learned over one hundred languages in his lifetime. Due to this gift, the British government selected him for a number of jobs that took him on travels throughout Europe and exotic locales such as Syria and Siam, which is modern day Thailand. He spoke Chinese fluently and served as the British governor of Hong Kong in the mid 1800's.

It has been said that Bowring wrote "In the Cross of Christ I Glory" after visiting Macao, a Portuguese colony near Hong Kong. There he saw a glorious bronze cross towering over the ruins of a large cathedral that had been ruined by a typhoon. He was so overwhelmed by the intense beauty, yet horror of the scene that he penned these words:

In the cross of Christ I glory, towering o'er the wrecks of time; All the light of sacred story, gathers round its head sublime. When the woes of life o'er-take me, hopes deceive, and fears annoy; Never shall the cross forsake me: Lo! It glows with peace and joy. When the sun of bliss is beaming light and love upon my way, From the cross the radiance streaming adds more luster to the day. Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, by the cross are sanctified; Peace is there that knows no measure, joys that through all time abide.

As we go into this Lenten season, let us be ever mindful of what the cross means to our salvation. "Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure, by the cross are sanctified." Praise to God for the ultimate gift of His Son Jesus, dying for us on the cross, so that we may have life everlasting.

Keep a song in your heart!
Tim

Dear Prayer Partners,

Many of you are faithful to pray the weekly prayer list. That is one of the underlying strengths of Pines Presbyterian Church. Prayer ranks among the most important things any of us do.

You are appreciated!

Something special is added when we pray together in person, sharing that bond of prayer and caring, that peaceful and refreshing time. Would you like to join us for the praying of the weekly list, plus any other concerns or praises mentioned? The in-person weekly prayer team currently meets at 9:00 am on Tuesdays in room C-10. It also coincides with the start time for Pines Preschool, for anyone who brings a child to the school. The exact day and time could be negotiable if that would enable someone to participate.

Contact Bethel Strawser by email BethelStrawser5@earthlink.net for further discussion.

Bethel Strawser

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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.

Missions and Current Events



MARCH AGAPE

The offering will benefit MAM's Home Care Cupboard.

MAM's Family Assistance programs help those in financial crisis. Supplies are distributed to needy Spring Branch families.

Please place donation items in the AGAPE Box in the hallway.

items needed:

HEMOCARE PACK:

Roll of Paper Towels, Dish Soap, Toilet Paper Rolls, Laundry Detergent, Household Cleaner, Trash Bags and Tissues.

Large totes/Sacks:

Big enough & strong enough to hold all the homecare products.

(Cleaners less than 32 oz. & Individually wrapped items are preferred).

FEMALE HYGIENE PACK:

Toothbrush, Deodorant, Razorblades, Large Ziplock Bags, Toothpaste, Soap, Shampoo, Feminine Hygiene Products and Lotion.

MALE HYGIENE PACK:

Toothbrush, Deodorant, Razorblades, Toothpaste, Large Ziplock Bags, Soap, Shampoo, Shaving Cream, Lotion and Shampoo.

*Smaller Sizes for Shampoos, Lotions & Toothpastes are Preferred.

for more info visit:

PINESpc.org

Pines Agape Offering for March will benefit the assistance pantries of Memorial Assistance Ministries (MAM). Items most needed right now are: Large, strong totes/sacks, dish soap, laundry detergent, tissues, shampoo, deodorant, combs, brushes, gallon Ziploc bags, bar soap and paper towels. Please bring these items to the Missions bin in the Fellowship Hall Hallway.

Together In Voice calls for new members to join our supportive community choir!



Together in Voice, a nonprofit community choir designed for people with mild to moderate memory loss, their caregivers, and volunteers seeks new members.

- No singing or previous choral experience is required.
- Choir members will learn and perform music in a supportive and welcoming environment enriching member's lives as individual abilities grow and strengthen.
- By engaging in music, especially singing, people with memory loss can improve mental and motor skills as well as boost mood by reducing stress and tension.
- Choir members with a diagnosis and their family members enjoy the opportunity to participate in all activities together, equally.

The choir meets Tuesday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the choir room at Chapelwood United Methodist Church. In weekly rehearsals, choir members warm-up, learn new songs, and participate in sectional rehearsals. Social breaks with refreshments are included. The choir performs several times a year.

All are welcome to visit our rehearsals. If you are interested in joining the choir, visiting a rehearsal, or for more information, please contact:

Jennifer L. Hackney, BC-MT, Co-Founder/Music Director
togetherinvoice@gmail.com

Or visit our website: togetherinvoice.org

Please come and share our joy of music and community!

The Property Committee will be having a family work day on **March 28th**. Please mark your calendars to come and help spruce up your church that morning. This is a **wonderful family activity!** Chef Walt will be cooking his famous **hamburgers** for all to enjoy! Sign ups will be on March 1 & March 8, or you may call the church office to sign up.

Note: we will be cleaning out the closet next to the kitchen in the Fellowship Hall, among several other indoor and outdoor projects. If you have any items you want to keep that are currently stored in that room, please send a note to cindy@pinespc.org by *March 8th* and she will label it with your name or committee or it will be disposed of. Our plan is to organize, give away, or throw away ALL unused items. Storage space in the church has disappeared **and** we must comply with City of Houston requirements on our storage space near the kitchen.

A long awaited answer to prayer.

Have you ever had a special person come into your life that you never would have expected could transform the way you experience life or even your faith? Well, several in our Pines family can say that about our friend Asa Mornix.

Many of you don't know the back-story of our Pines History with Asa. Some may only have known him as the African American man who sat on the bench at our back door on Sundays. Others knew him personally and some not at all. Some prayed for him. Some took him to lunch. Others bought or brought him food, clothes or other needed items like phone cards or medicines when he was sick. Some could easily strike up a conversation with him. Others were too scared or afraid to even speak. Some complained about his presence while others praised the fact that we were doing our best at Pines to be the hands and feet of Christ to Asa. There were ups and downs for Asa during his time with us at Pines. Yet, the best news is the fact that this article has a happy ending.

Asa first appeared in our neighbourhood the summer of 2017, hanging out at the stop sign near our Pines corner of Kimberly and W Bough Ln. Several Pines members stopped to ask how they could help. His stop sign hang out soon became our back door late in the evenings. Many did not realize that Asa had been homeless and living on the streets for more than 7 years at the time. Hurricane Harvey hit Houston that fall and so did very cold weather that December. By the grace and mercy of several members who unanimously agreed we invited Asa into our Pines gymnasium nightly to sleep and take shelter. Asa at that point was well known by many members. He had undergone a Pines background check to establish his history, our and his safety and many were in fervent prayer for him weekly in hopes of helping find both shelter and employment. Yet, from Dec 2017- Jan 2020, Asa sadly was 'stuck' in what is called the 'cycle of poverty'.

The **cycle of poverty** is the "set of factors or events by which poverty, once started, is likely to continue unless there is outside intervention". Families trapped in the cycle of poverty, have either limited or no resources. There are many disadvantages that collectively work in a circular process making it virtually impossible for individuals to break the cycle. This occurs when poor people do not have the resources necessary to get out of poverty, such as financial capital, education, or connections. In other words, impoverished individuals do not have access to economic and social resources as a result of their poverty. This lack may increase their poverty. This could mean that the poor remain poor throughout their lives.

Yet, the prayers and support continued on for Asa. Visits to MAM for employment counselling ensued. Research was done with local homeless ministries like *SEARCH*, the *BEACON*, *New Hope Housing* and the *Houston Homeless Coalition*. Accompanying visits downtown to his assigned *BEACON* social worker were also scheduled to help encourage him each month as he slowly waited approval for a home on a very inefficient homeless housing waitlist.

During this wait, Asa's weekly routine included rising early before 5am in our Pines gym and walking to the Memorial City Mall thereafter to gain shelter since its doors opened by 5:30am. Later in the morning Asa would bus to *Cross Roads Day Shelter* where he found community as well as volunteered to help other homeless clients seeking encouragement. A lunch meal served, showers provided and a place to do laundry were a 'God send' to Asa at *Cross Roads*. Back to the Memorial neighbourhood in the evenings is where he returned and most could find Asa in the Randall's food store or Barnes & Nobel's bookstore chairs resting until he was allowed back into our Pines gym when all Pines evening activities were complete.

Many many months passed and Asa's situation would look by most in the world as 'IMPOSSIBLE' to solve. Yet, faithful prayers continued upward and Pines members kept trusting and hoping in the promises our God graciously offers us through faith. Matthew 19:26 says "...with God all things are possible." And indeed, what seemed to be impossible wasn't for God. As promised at the beginning of this article. There is good news and a happy ending to this story.

In the fall of 2019 Asa was granted a change to his 'vulnerability status' within the Houston Homeless Coalition Housing system. *New Hope Housing* was able to offer him subsidized housing at their Perry location. *SEARCH* homeless services will now provides a social worker and offers employment placement help so Asa can begin taking those next steps towards health and wholeness.

Asa is no longer homeless, but is the proud recipient of a very nice one-bedroom apartment with a new community and social system, which can help him. God indeed does answer our prayers. Below are photos of Asa the first day entering his new home with Pines members: Roger Mowell and Robin Brady on Jan 10, 2020.

Please continue to keep Asa in your prayers. Currently he is living in his new place, and continues to volunteer at *Cross Roads*. May the Lord bring him healing and wholeness; physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.



God is good!
Many thanks to Robin for
submitting this article.



Stephen Ministry – The Three Ns of Grief

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” – Matthew 5:4

“No one told me that grief felt so like fear.” – C. S. Lewis

If you have experienced the loss of a loved one as a member of this church, you have probably received copies of Kenneth Haugk’s *“Journeying through Grief”* booklets. The first of four booklets in the series is entitled *“A Time to Grieve”*, and the subject of the first chapter is *“The Three Ns of Grief”*. Dr. Haugk points out that people sometimes feel pressured to not grieve or to just *“get over it”*. He notes that grief is neither optional nor a sign of weakness. On the contrary, grief is *normal, natural, and necessary*. He says you need to give yourself permission to grieve.

Grief is something that we all face sooner or later. While everyone grieves differently, Jesus assures us that with Him we do not face grief alone. Some of us may find comfort in a GriefShare group, and there are some good ones we can recommend. For others, a close friend or confidant who will sit with us, listen, pray with and for us, is a more comfortable option; this is the Stephen Minister model. If you would like to learn more about Stephen Ministry, please contact Reverend Bill Willis at bill.00.willis@gmail.com or 318-548-4414.

CAMP PINES
2020

Please join us for Camp Pines 2020!

WE ARE OFFERING 3-WEEKS OF SUMMER CAMPS
PACKED WITH FUN, HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES, DAILY ART PROJECTS!

with *Linda Barber*

<p>Schedule:</p> <p>WEEK 1 (JUNE 1-9): OUTDOOR ADVENTURES</p> <p>WEEK 2 (JUNE 8-11): TELL ME A STORY</p> <p>WEEK 3 (JUNE 15-18): WET AND WILD!</p>	<p>plenty of play-time & SPECIAL EVENTS EVERY WEEK!</p> <p>JOIN US FOR 1-, 2-, OR ALL 3-WEEKS. REGISTER SOON. SPACE IS LIMITED!</p>	<p>Info:</p> <p>DAYS: MONDAY – THURSDAY. NO CAMP ON FRIDAYS.</p> <p>TIMES: 9:00 AM TO 1:00 PM. PACK A LUNCH.</p> <p>TUITION: \$225/WEEK</p> <p>REGISTRATION FEE: ONE-TIME \$25 FEE</p>
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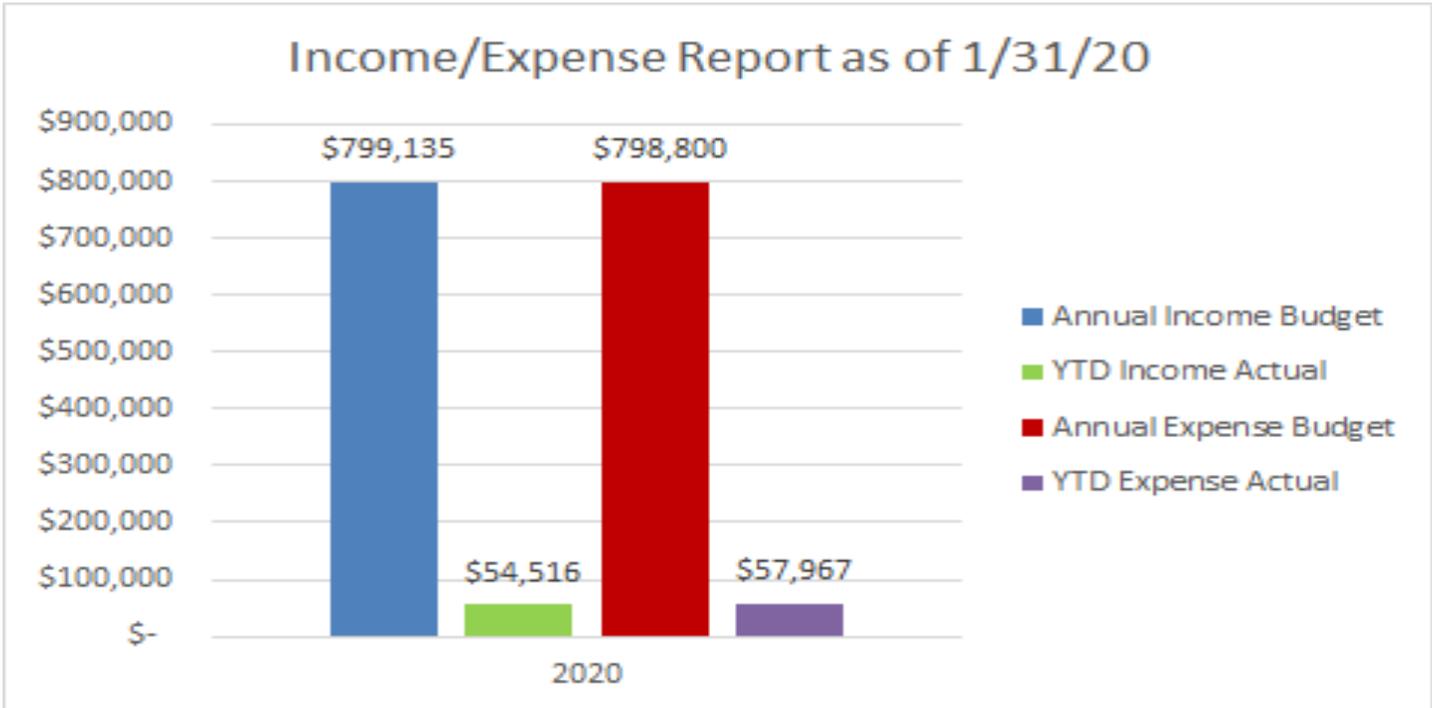
Requirements: Must be fully potty-trained and born before December 31, 2016.

Teachers: Classes will be taught by Pines Preschool teachers. High School/College Aids will also help with programming.

Priority Registration: Priority will be given to current preschool students and church members, followed by siblings and new families.

Pines Presbyterian
—PRESCHOOL—

Stewardship



Session Meeting Notes

The Session met for both Stated and Special meetings this month. Here are some highlights:

- Approved the 2020 Budget.
- Welcomed Angela Bullock, Dylan Huntsman, and Dana and Linda Harkey into the Pines family.
- Elected Dan Schafer as Clerk of Session, and Karen MacAllister as Interim Treasurer.
- Approved moving to one Cantata Service at 12:00 noon on Good Friday.

Dan Schafer, Clerk of Session

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW! We have several members in need of meals for various reasons. Some of our members are ill, some are injured, and some are recovering. If you can bake a small meal and bring it to the church, please call Shirley Bollich. Shirley could really use some help with this ministry. Pines has always had a caring heart and assisted their church family. Let's all pull behind Shirley and help her provide these meals to our members. If you need Shirley's phone number, please call the church office. Thank you!!

Daylight Savings
Time 2020
begins on
Sunday March 8th



Be sure to set your clocks
forward one hour before
going to bed on Saturday!