



Staying Connected: --- You can now find upcoming opportunities to connect by visiting our website: pinespc.org. Join in on the next scheduled meeting, class or event by signing up for your free Zoom account: zoom.us/signup. View our archived videos anytime and also join in "live"!



Live Worship Services: --- Pines Worship Services on Sundays are now live streaming! 10:45 am worship services can be viewed by visiting our website: pinespc.org You can also catch us on facebook for the same live streaming worship services.



Online Giving: ---As always, we thank you for your generous sharing of treasures in the spirit and practice of stewardship. Please visit our website for online giving: pinespc.org



Meet Santa Claus (also known as Mark Trotter with Center Ministries). The Pines Mission Committee put together many bags of what they called "Snowman Soup" also known as hot chocolate along with mini stockings stuffed with candy for Mark to hand out to the kids in Bateswood involved with Center Ministries. The kids and parents were so grateful and had a few happy moments in what I am sure has been a difficult time for them all during this pandemic. We ask that you please keep these children in your prayers this year.

Thank you PINES!



Happy New Year from the Preschool! We ended 2020 on a high note as we once again partnered with the church in support of the Sherwood Christmas Store. This year our generous families and staff donated toys for over 40 children. We are now hard at work planning for the new year ahead. Priority Registration for current families and church members begins Monday, January 25. Please call the school office at (713) 467-9358 if you would like more information or to RSVP for one of our Open Houses.



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

PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

January 2021

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



Christmas Eve

PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OUTDOOR SERVICE
[church parking lot]

4:00 PM 

INDOOR SERVICE
[church sanctuary]

6:30 PM 

THURSDAY

DECEMBER 24

Pines Family News & Current Events

De-deck the Halls!

What goes up must come down! The Worship Committee invites the Pines Family to join us on Sunday, Jan. 3 following Worship to take down the Christmas decorations. We'll have small jobs like wrapping ornaments as well as big tasks like taking down garlands. Anything you can do will help. Thank you and Happy New Year!



A NOTE OF CAUTION... please remember to bring your door card to church when you plan to be here. We would like to caution everyone that should you see anyone lingering near the door that you do not know, please do not let them in. As part of our security protocol, all visitors to the church should enter through the front doors near the reception desk. We are reminding you of this as a precaution for the protection of you and others in the building. Thank you for adhering to this policy. Our office hours are 9 to 4 Monday through Thursday and 9 to 2 on Fridays.



Pandemic Fatigue!

These days every newspaper, blog, advertiser, utility, government, church, restaurant, good-hearted encourager, crackpot, tweeter and neighbor has something to say about the subject! If they're not **telling you** how much they're doing to protect you from getting the virus, many of them are **telling you** what you should do to survive Pandemic Fatigue. Sure, everyone's tired of dealing with this killer and with all its threats, heartaches, disruptions and consequences. It's also sure that just like noses, everyone's got an opinion. And oh so many are willing not only to share, but to **tell you** how you should deal with it all.

But has anyone offered to just **listen to you** or pray for you? Is there anyone to hear what **you** have to say? To listen to **you**?

Do you need to tell it to someone? Certainly, the Lord himself is always ready to listen, but there are also some local human beings ready to listen as well. Among them are those who are called Stephen Ministers. They are available and trained to do just that. To listen to you. If the burdens seem too heavy to carry alone – if the grief or the anxiety needs to be expressed – if you need to find out what you really think by hearing yourself tell it out loud to a ready listener – then why not try a Stephen Minister? It's free and it's confidential. You can find out more by contacting Bill Willis at bill.00.willis@gmail.com or calling the church office for his phone number.

Dear Pines friends, I know many of you had been eagerly awaiting news about our baby due on March 4th. I would love to keep you updated and I plan to!

First, my sister, Beth Eschliman, is hosting a Baby Sprinkle Shower via Zoom on Saturday, February 6th at 3pm. Your presence would be a present! For the Zoom link, please call or text Cindy's mother, Heidi Eschliman, at 620-727-3492. Cards may be sent to the Mood family at 11658 Lakeside Park Drive, Houston, TX 77077. Thank you for your continued prayers throughout this pregnancy! Virtual hugs, Rev. Cindy & family



Missions



Despite a few modifications to the normal routine for the Sherwood Christmas Store, the results this year were spectacular. The Missions Committee would like to provide sincere thanks to all those who stepped up to provide gifts, financial donations, gift-wrapping skills, food packing, delivery service and prayer for the Sherwood children. The Pines Preschool was a big participant this year and shared some wonderful stories on the children participating and serving others. We served 36 families, which included 92 children who each received several gifts. A Christmas meal bag, along with groceries to help bridge the gap while school is out for the Christmas break was also included. Families received a Walmart gift card to purchase perishables to go with their Christmas meal. Goodie bags prepared during the Pines Advent Missions Day

were also given to the children. Bonnie Reyes, our Communities in School liaison at Sherwood reported that the parents were overwhelmed with gratitude for the gifts and food. Many of the parents had resigned themselves to not being able to provide gifts for their children this year. Once again, the entire Pines family stepped up to shower our neighborhood with Christmas love! Christmas Blessings, Kari



Service Beyond The Walls

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

**Please mark your calendars with the NEWSLETTER DUE DATES:
January 22 (for February 2021 issue)**

The Music Department

Greetings from the Music Department!

I always look forward to the new year! It's a time to reflect on the past year, and to look ahead to the prospects of better things to come. When the calendar turns to January, not only does the new year commence, but I age one year (yes, I will be 71 on the 12th!) I look forward to the flowers blooming in spring...the April rains. I am always revived in the new year after all the rehearsals, performances, meetings, and parties of December. A time to relax after the responsibilities of the Advent season. I also look through fresh eyes at the world around me, the beautiful things that God has created just for us. This always reminds me of the hymn All Things Bright and Beautiful:

"All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small, all things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all! Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings, God made their glowing colors, God made their tiny wings. The purple headed mountain, the river running by, the sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky. The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun, the ripe fruits in the garden, God made them everyone!"

I think the best verse is the last one. The first four verses tell us of what God has created for us, but the last verse basically tells us to enjoy these gifts and tell others about them. Praise God for giving us all these things and a way to enjoy!

"God gave us eyes to see them and lips that we might tell how great is God Almighty, who has made all things well."

In this new year, let's all look anew at all the things that God has made for us, and enjoy, for He certainly made ALL things well!!

Keep a song in your heart.
Tim

Pines In-car-nation



In-Car-Nation returns Sunday Jan. 10th at 5 PM on our back parking lot!

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!



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.

Pastor's Page

Happy New Year!

I think most people are happy to put the year 2020 behind us and look forward to, what we hope will be, a magnificent 2021. The anticipation of this new year brings with it such hope for change. We are ready to be released from our virus induced exile and captivity. We are ready to be able to regather at some point this year without concern of passing on or catching the deadly virus that has upended our lives. When the first vaccines rolled out I felt there was a collective sigh in knowing this was the beginning of the end to what we hope has become our temporary normal. We look forward to the day when we don't have to wear masks, don't have to stay six feet apart, don't have to stay at home, and don't have to refrain from hugging our family of faith.

The year of our Lord two thousand and twenty one will be a good year! The year will be good, maybe even great because it **IS** the year of our Lord. Have you ever thought about what it means to say, "in the year of our Lord"? What does it mean if we take those words to heart? As I thought about these six simple words I realized they are packed with great hope and a promise. If we, as faithful and active Christians, claim 2021 as the year of our Lord, then the opportunities and blessings are countless. When we say those six words, we are proclaiming that this year is going to belong to God. We are not saying, "in the year of our president," or "in the year of our boss," or "in the year of social media," or "the year of the virus," or "the year of evil," or whatever other label you can name. This is the year of our Lord, and it is our Lord who has granted each and everyone of us this time to do as the Westminster Confession says, "...to glorify God and to enjoy him forever."

What could 2021 look like if we try to glorify God in everything we do from taking out the trash to helping with a mission project; from our conversations with friends, co-workers and family to our conversations with people with whom we struggle; from how we spend our money, to how share our treasures with the church. If we consciously seek to live each day of 2021 as if it belongs to the Lord, then glorifying God and enjoying God's many gifts to us will be simple. Will there be struggles along the way? Absolutely! But I believe that even in the midst of our struggles God is present because not only does the year belong to God, so do we and we are God's most precious creations.

May we all claim 2021 as the year of our Lord and by doing so may our lives reflect our love for the one who created time, and us. May God's amazing blessings be with you all!

Happy New Year,

Stewardship

Stewardship Notes:

1. Pledge income is running behind through 11 months (81% received, vs 91% expected.) It is normal to expect a strong income month in December. Non-pledge income is running well below prior years experience due to Covid shut down.
2. Expenses are also running below budget year to date due to fewer activities and careful monitoring of costs by committees.
3. The Net Loss through November is (\$28,308), a slight improvement over October 31 results.
4. Pines received a Cares Act PPP Loan of \$58,295. We have applied for and expect to receive full forgiveness of this loan, which will allow the proceeds to be used to offset the net operating loss.
5. In order to be included in your tax contributions statement from Pines for 2020, all gifts must be received by the church office before closing (3 pm on 12/31), postmarked 12/31/2020 or received online by midnight on 12/31/2020.

2021 Stewardship campaign update:

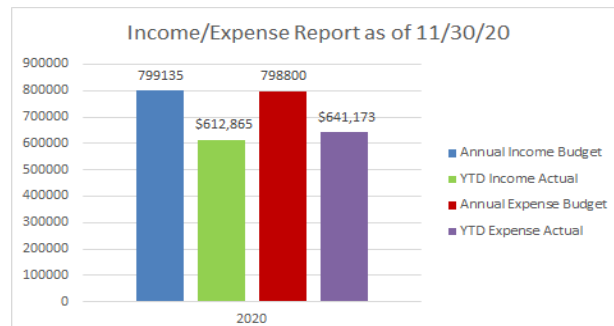
We continue to receive your generous pledges for 2021. Thank you to all who have responded to the Forward Together in Faith campaign. If your family hasn't made your pledge yet, it's not too late! You can return your card through the mail to Pines, or drop it off at the church office. Or you can simply email Alexis Graham, alexis@pinespc.org, with your information. Help Pines increase the number of pledges we can count on in 2021.

Why is it important to pledge? In order to operate in a fiscally sound manner and plan for the many activities (Christian Education, fellowship, worship, etc.) as well as the mission work that attracted you and your family to worship with us, the Session must have some idea of the income we can expect to receive to fund those activities in 2021. Your financial gifts are very important and very much appreciated by all. They are our lifeblood!

Stewardship FAQs:

From time to time we receive questions from members where the answers could be of interest to other members. Going forward, we will highlight those questions and answers in the newsletter under this heading. This month's questions are:

1. **Is it possible to pay my pledge for 2021 in advance?** This question arises when it may provide a tax benefit to the donor to receive a deduction in 2020 for their 2021 pledge. The answer is yes! Simply send your payment in when you are ready (before 12/31) and mark it 2021 pledge. If you are concerned about whether it was received, please contact Alexis Graham, alexis@pinespc.org.
2. **If I make a memorial contribution in honor of a member, how are those funds used?** Many members' families request that those interested in making a memorial gift in honor of their loved one send the contribution to Pines. If the family also notifies the church office that they wish to designate the funds to be used in a certain way (i.e. to support christian education or mission, as examples) then that is how the funds will be utilized. If memorial funds are not designated for a specific purpose, the Session has determined that funds will be used to support the property fund for building maintenance and use.



Youth Happenings



Our New Confirmation Students

Let's say "Congratulations" to this year's Confirmation Class!

It's been a long journey, but our 2020 Confirmands are ready to join the church! Congratulations to... **Thomas Babineck, Ryan Lade, Harris Timmreck, and McKinley Wood!** They continued on with the class amidst all of the interruptions and delays and will be confirmed at the session meeting in January! This year also would not have been possible without their mentors: Ron Langston, Walter Penberthy, Phil Wetz, and Diane Wright. They helped keep the process meaningful for our students and showed them how amazing it is to be a member of Pines. Thank you to our mentors, and students, for making this such a memorable year!
Thanks,
Jesse

Congratulations!

PINES & kids

Have you met our new nursery caregiver? This is the lovely and compassionate Ty! Come by the nursery between 9-noon on Sunday mornings and say hello! Here are some of her answers to interesting questions. Maybe you could ask your family the same questions this week!

Question: What are you thankful for?

Ty's Answer: My relationship with God. Everything placed in my life is from Him

Q: What was your favorite school subject?

A: Science

Q: If you could pick a superpower, what would it be?

A: Mind reading

Q: What makes you happy?

A: Being around family and just enjoying life.

Q: Who is your favorite storybook character?

A: The Grinch

Q: If you could grow anything in a yard, what would you grow?

A: Either a bunch of colorful flowers or a vegetable garden.

Q: If you could make up a new holiday, what would it be?

A: Giving day. Everyone would have to do kind acts for someone else or the planet.

Q: What makes you feel brave?

A: Having the mindset of faith over fear.

Q: If your life had a title, what would it be?

A: The life of Ty

Q: What is your favorite Bible passage?

A: Romans 10:9-10



Join us for Family-Style Sunday School in W-12 as we continue "learning to love like God".

The Columbarium will be undergoing some cosmetic uplifts over the next few months to celebrate its' 10th birthday. The committee noticed that some of the bushes that were intended to grow and get bushy are being maintained and trimmed by some well-hearted soul and not grounds crew. We are asking our Pines family to please allow the property personnel to handle the care and upkeep of the Columbarium. Thank you.