



DECEMBER EVENTS

Join us for Pines Alternative Christmas Market Dec 2 and Dec 9 in the Fellowship Hall Hallway. Sales will benefit: Brookwood, Freedom Place, Feed My Starving Children, Heifer International & New Life School. There will also be a multitude of knitted items from the Pines Stitch Ministry for sale that will benefit each of these organizations. See page 7 for more details.



Sherwood Christmas Store

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

See Page 7 for more details

We need and appreciate your help in stocking the Christmas Store

PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Carol of Christmas
Chancel Choir & Orchestra
DECEMBER 16TH 10:45 A.M.

December 16:
Pines Christmas
Cantata (pg 6) &
Youth Bake Sale
(pg 4)



December 24, Christmas Eve:

5:00—Family Candle-lighting Service

7:00 & 11:00—Traditional Communion
and Candle-lighting service



Pines Family News

Merry Christmas from your Pines Staff!



to the family of Pines member Robin Winters. Robin passed away in November and a service will be held for her at Pines on December 1st at 10 AM. Please keep her family in your prayers.

Women's Retreat 2019 is in the works! Mark you calendars and plan to be part of another wonderful event on February 2, 2019. Our speaker this year is Linda Withers of Pathway Insights (<http://pathwayinsights.com/topics/>)

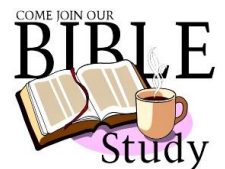


Once again, Pines will be ordering Poinsettias from the Brookwood Community to decorate our Sanctuary for the Christmas Season. 2018 Poinsettia Signups will run through December 2nd. Please stop by the hallway outside of the Fellowship Hall to sign up for a Poinsettia *or two*. The cost of each Poinsettia is \$10 and they may be taken home after the 11:00 PM Service on Christmas Eve, December 24th.

Just a reminder....PLEASE label all food left in the refrigerator or freezer. ANYTHING NOT LABELED will be thrown away. Also, when you have food left over from an event, please **DO NOT** leave it at the church. An excellent place to donate the leftover food is the Mission of Yahweh. Call the Mission to verify their need at 713-466-4785. The mission is located at 10247 Algiers, 77041. Thank you for taking care of your church home and those in need!

JOURNEY THROUGH ACTS

Have you ever wondered how the Christian Church began? Join with us as we journey through that beginning. This study led by Bill Vislocky will meet: 2nd Monday of each month (yes, we meet just once a month) at 10:00—11:00 a.m. We will meet in room C10 beginning January 14th, 2019. Our study group has just completed the book of John and are moving on to the book of Acts. We would love to have you join us for some great discussions and fellowship. For more information contact Bill, wvvislocky@aol.com



We received our quarterly statement from Randalls indicating the amount we will receive this month. Because many of you have linked your Randalls card to the Pines account, we will receive \$126.84 this quarter as of September 30. Thanks to everyone that has contributed in this way! If you have not already linked your card to the Pines account, please sign up at your local Randalls store. Our Randalls Good Neighbor number is: 2210. Thanks everyone!

**Please mark your calendars with the following
NEWSLETTER DUE DATES:
December 14 (January 2019 newsletter)
January 18 (February 2019 newsletter)**

Bible Quiz....

Who appeared to tell Mary that she was with child?



Answer: The
angel Gabriel

WE HAVE THROWN IN THE TOWEL!

We are looking for someone to prayerfully consider washing the dish towels in the kitchen each week. You would pick them up at church on Sunday and bring them back the following Sunday. If you feel you can help in this way, please give Cindy in the church office a call and she will give you the details.

Advent blessings to you,

Advent is a wonderful time of the year for many reasons, especially for the hope it brings as we wait for the birth of the Christ child. With the birth of our Savior the world gets a reset, a renewal, and an opportunity to reconnect with our Creator God. This reset, renewal and reconnection are important for a healthy faith and a stronger life as we live into the Kingdom of God. This is an opportunity we should celebrate and live into not only on Christmas day, but every day of our lives. The question arises during this Advent season, how do you renew and reconnect to your faith, your Creator God and to the many gifts God has given you?

Just a few weeks ago I was gifted with such an opportunity from The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). I was invited to attend a conference called CREDO. This conference invites ministers to attend so they may cultivate wholeness — their spiritual, vocational, health, and financial well-being — to better serve the Church. Specially selected conference faculty guide participants in reflecting on and growing in these key areas, so that they can develop their leadership potential.

A CREDO conference becomes an intentional, Christ-centered learning community, as pastors share with one another their knowledge, experience, compassion, and care. In this way, CREDO helps us replenish our spirits and rediscover the passion that first animated our call to ministry.

Through a discernment and visioning process that is the hallmark of this seven-day conference, we had several opportunities to contemplate who we are and what we believe God may be calling us to become. During the conference, each pastor is asked to develop a personal CREDO plan, which helps to guide us when we return home and seek to implement the work of our minds and hearts in our ministries.

My CREDO plan centered around two of my favorite scriptures Matthew 25:34-36 and Micah 6:8. I took specific phrases from those scriptures to develop the framework of my plan. The three paragraphs below are that framework. How this plan is played out will be the topic of a future month's article.

I am a Created and Blessed Child of God who has been created to **do justice** by **feeding** those who are hungry both physically, emotionally and spiritually; to **give** living **water** to those who are thirsty; to **welcome** the outsider; to **care** for those who are **vulnerable**, and those whom people **avoid**; to **listen** to those **imprisoned** by the things of life.

I am a Created and Blessed Child of God who has been created to **embrace faithful love** of myself, others, and God.

I am a Created and Blessed Child of God who has been created to walk humbly with God.

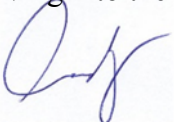
I will do this by:

Learning to let go of control and empowering others

Slowdown and enjoy the journey by letting others take some of the load

Setting better boundaries

Living into the Hope the Christ Child brings,



Youth Happenings!

Join us for our Bake Sale on December 16th!

On Sunday, December 16th, the Youth Ministry will be holding a Bake Sale to raise funds for 2019 Missions! Starting at 9:00am, baked goods will be available in the hallway outside of the Fellowship Hall.



For our 6th-12th grade students, we will have a baking day in the Fellowship Hall kitchen on Saturday, December 15th, from 11:00am—4:00pm. If you plan on coming, RSVP to Jesse!

PINES kids

Infants-5th graders are invited to join us for our Christmas Gift Workshop from 1:00-3:00 PM on Saturday, December 15. Don't miss this opportunity for your children to make and wrap Christmas gifts for your family!



**PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BUDGET VS. ACTUAL INCOME REPORT
ELEVEN MONTHS ENDED 11/30/18**

Budgeted Income	\$	840,437
Actual Income		<u>745,405</u>
Over (Under)	\$	(95,032)

Please remember that contributions must be post-marked or in the church office no later than 12/31/18 to be included on your 2018 contribution statement! Don't forget about the wonderful tax advantages of donating appreciated stock, or donating all or a portion of the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA! Be sure to allow plenty of time for these transactions.

Contact Alexis Graham, Accounting Mgr., for more information (alexis@pinespc.org).

SPLENDORS OF EASTERN EUROPE
Including The Passion Play Of Oberammergau

11 Days: June 3 - 13, 2020

Prague • Budapest • Vienna • Munich

Hosted By
Pastor Andy Gans

PINES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

\$4499 Per Person from Houston

(Air/land tour price is \$4049 plus \$450 government taxes/airline surcharges)

Visiting Prague, Budapest, Vienna, Munich, and Oberammergau

Price Includes: Roundtrip air from Houston, first class/select hotels, hotels & guesthouses in Oberammergau, first class (Category 1) admissions tickets for the Passion Play, most meals, comprehensive sightseeing with an English-speaking guide and more!!

For a brochure & more information, please contact: Pastor Andy Gans

Tel: (713) 467-2234 / Email: andy@pinespc.org

<http://pinespc.org/trip-to-eastern-europe/>

SPACE IS LIMITED - BOOK NOW TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT!

*This is your last chance to experience the world-famous
Passion Play of Oberammergau until 2030!!*

The Music Department

Greetings from the Music Department!

We invite you to our annual Christmas Cantata on December 16, in the 10:45 a.m. service. This year we will present John W. Peterson's "Carol of Christmas." This particular work is somewhat different than cantatas that we have done in the past in that it is based almost entirely on the carols we all know and love. Familiar carols include: O Come, All Ye Faithful, Joy to the World, O Little Town of Bethlehem, Away in a Manger, Silent Night, While shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night, Angels We have Heard On High, Down the Trail and Onward, We Three Kings of Orient Are, and O Holy Night.

The cantata contains beautiful arrangements for the choir, duets, solos, and an inspiring trio of "We Three Kings." The orchestra will be joining the Chancel Choir in this presentation. Please join us as we worship the birth of Christ through music.

The Chancel Choir and special groups will also be presenting music at the Buckingham on December 16 at 3:00 p.m., and the Vespers service at Parkway Place on December 23 at 3:30 p.m.

Have a wonderful Christmas season and remember to 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 does. 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 Wednesdays (the hour before the Wednesday Bible Study) in room C-10. It also coincides with the start time for Pines Preschool, for anyone who brings a child to that. 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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John 8:12 Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."

There is a Light

There is a light
In the world, a healing spirit,
more powerful than any darkness
we may encounter.

We sometimes lose sight of this force
when there is so much suffering,
too much pain.

Then suddenly the spirit will emerge
through the lives of ordinary people
who care and answer in extraordinary ways.

Stephen ministers are called to be light bearers, prepared to share in the lives of those who need a friend during a challenging season of life. If you are in need of such a friend please call Barbara Retzloff at 713-467-2234.



Christ caring for people through people

**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

Agape Communion Offering December

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS MARKET

This year we're expanding our Alternative Gift offering to include not only Brookwood but also Freedom Place, the New Life School, Feed My Starving Children and Heifer International. We're calling it **The Alternative Christmas Market**. The Market will be on Dec 2 and Dec 9, before and after worship service. There will be representatives from Brookwood, Freedom Place, The New Life School, and Heifer International offering cards 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. You will have a chance to get to know these partners better by visiting with them at the market. Toshi and the Stitch Ministry will be there selling their beautiful scarves, caps, booties and other knitted wares. The proceeds from the sale of the knitted items will be donated to Brookwood, Freedom Place, The New Life School, and Heifer International. There will be Christmas ornaments made by children who have received Feed My Starving Children mannapacks. 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 first 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 2 and Dec 9.

10:15am – 10:45am 11:45am – 12:30pm

Donations may be payable directly to the charity or to Pines.

For more info contact Kathy Ropshaw kr@jhyi.com

more information on next page...



Reminder...This Holiday Season do your regular Amazon shopping at smile.amazon.com/ch/74-1460644 and AmazonSmile donates to Pines Presbyterian Church.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

FOR THE

SHERWOOD CHRISTMAS STORE

opening to shoppers on Saturday, December 8th

8:00 am - 1:00 pm in the Sherwood gym

Lots of elf minded volunteers are needed to help bring the joy of Christmas to the children of the Sherwood community.

Volunteers needs include: Transporting gifts from Pines to Sherwood, setting up the toys for the shoppers, assisting with shopping, gift wrapping, cashier, clean up and more. We'll meet at Pines at 8:00 am to load our gifts and pray, then caravan to Sherwood to setup the store and open at 9:00 am.

Contract: Kari Work - kwork@mgcinc.net

Don't miss this joyous Christmas tradition!

Session Meeting Notes

The Session of Pines Presbyterian Church met on November 26, 2018. Here are some highlights:

- Called a Congregational Meeting on December 9, 2018, following worship, for the purpose of electing six elders to the Class of 2022 and one elder to fill an unexpired term on the Class of 2021.
- Approved changes to the Pines Wedding Booklet and wedding fee schedule to lower the cost of wedding for Pines members.
- Received a Motion regarding Faithful Engagement on the Issue of Climate Change. The motion was referred to an ad hoc committee for final drafting, including a congregational listening session in early January.
- Received a report from the Ruling Elder Commissioners to the November 17, 2018 meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant. Actions taken at the meeting included approving an organizational plan for the presbytery and approving nine of 10 proposed amendments to the Book of Order.

Dan Schafer, Clerk of Session

DECEMBER AGAPE conti...

This month we're asking for financial contributions to any of our Alternative Christmas Market participants.

Brookwood, Brookshire TX

Through the Grace of God, The Brookwood Community provides an educational environment that creates meaningful jobs, builds a sense of belonging, and provides meaning and purpose for adults with disabilities.

Freedom Place/Arrow Ministries, Spring TX

Arrow's Freedom Place is a Christ-centered care and recovery center for underage female victims of domestic child sex trafficking. It is the first long-term, comprehensive care facility in Texas for underage victims of domestic child sex trafficking and is one of only five such facilities in the United States. Our mission is to offer a successful path to freedom for American children who have suffered as victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Heifer International, Little Rock, AR

Heifer's mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and to care for the earth. Heifer does this by providing appropriate livestock, training and related services to small-scale farmers and communities worldwide.

New Life School, Santa Maria de Jesus, Guatemala

Our vision is for the children to see themselves in God's eyes, to know He loves them and has a purpose for their lives and to help them obtain that purpose. We want them to become productive adults who have a strong personal relationship with Jesus Christ as their foundation.

Contributions may be made at the Alternative Christmas Market on Dec 2 and Dec 9 (checks payable directly to the charity of choice or 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.

For info contact Kathy Ropshaw kr@jhyi.com



**“We are thankful for
Pines Church and
we wish you a
very merry
and
blessed holiday season!”**

