

December 3:

Join us as we kick off the beginning of December at 9:30 or 11:00 a.m.

December 10:

Sign up for an Alternative Gift or join in to volunteer at the Westside Homeless assembly and delivery (see back page)

December 17:

Christmas Cantata
"Then Came the Light"
9:30 and 11:00 a.m. and
Youth Bake Sale

Christmas Eve Morning:

9:30 & 11:00 a.m.
Regular Worship Services

Christmas Eve Evening:

5:00 PM

Children & Family
Service

7:00 and 11:00 PM

Traditional
Candlelight &
Communion Services

We hope you will join us at one or all of these services as we welcome you to know, love, and trust in Jesus Christ by *Looking Upward, Growing Inward, and Serving Outward.*

PINES FAMILY NEWS



Dear Pines Friends,

Don and I would like to thank all of you for the thoughtful cards, notes, hugs, prayers and concern after the death of our very dear, ten year old granddaughter, Emmie. Many have expressed that there are no words for the loss of a child and grandchild. This is so true, however your love, concern and prayers speak for you and bring us much comfort. Please continue to pray for Emmie's mother Cathy, father Trey, sister Allie and brother A.J. This time of the year will be very difficult for them. Love and blessings, Carol Schneider

If you missed worship on Dedication Sunday, November 12, please don't forget to turn in your pledge card for 2018. Our campaign this year highlights the opportunity for spiritual growth that is available to each of us when we give unselfishly of our time, talent and finances as an act of discipleship. Grow with us by turning in your 2018 pledge card to the church office or in the collection plate on Sunday. You can also notify the church treasurer, Peggy Smith (ptreasurer@pinespc.org) or Pines accounting manager, Alexis Graham (alexis@pinespc.org), via email, of your pledge amount for 2018.

Did you donate an air mattress for the first responders? If so, let Cindy know so that she can get yours back to you. Otherwise, the church will keep them for when we have youth groups come through. Thank you!!



The annual **Pines Christmas Progressive Dinner** is scheduled for **Saturday, December 2**, from 5:30 to 8:30 PM. Join us for a night of fun and fellowship and great food!

Covenant Bible Study

This new Bible Study at Pines has been a great and meaningful experience for all involved this fall! If you weren't able to join us, it is not too late! We will be signing up for the winter term beginning December 3 and all are welcome to jump in for the next one or two sessions.



Agape Communion Offering

The Agape Communion Offering for December 3rd will benefit Westside Homeless Partnership. Please see the poster in the Fellowship Hall with pull-off notes listing the items needed. Take one or more from there OR simply purchase any of the following items: 2 cake mixes and 2 cans of frosting, 3 bags of sugar cookie mix, 2 boxes of deluxe Mac & Cheese, 2lb bag of rice & 2lb bag of beans, 2 boxes of stuffing, 2 jars of gravy, 4 cans of green beans or 4 cans of corn. Please bring the items on Sunday, December 3rd. Thank you!

Dear Pines Church,

Thank you for the much needed supplies for clean up. Margaret Schafer recently mentioned to me about your "Flood Victim" outreach Saturday that you hosted. Everything we received was greatly appreciated as we rebuild our lives, our home and settled into a somewhat life style for the time being. Thank you for thinking of us flood victims.

Laura and Rick Mendenhall P.S.-Kirk Schafer's in-laws

A Message From Our Pastor

Grace & Peace to you all,

The season of Advent and Christmas is upon us. This time of year is supposed to be a time where we are to wait with joyful anticipation of what is to come on what we now call Christmas day. For many, this season is full of joy and happiness as we anxiously await the celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace, but for some it only brings up memories of lost loved ones, or it is a reminder of joy lost due to financial, health, and/or physical and emotional problems.

The great gift of Christmas brings hope to all of us no matter where we are in life. The hope that is given to us by God in the grace of Jesus is a gift of love that is poured out for all. I pray you can share this gift of love and hope with others as Christ has called us to do.

We have great opportunities to do this as a church family this season. Our Alternative Christmas Gift Fair will share some hope with residents and families of the Brookwood Community. Brookwood is a God-centered educational, residential, and entrepreneurial community for adults with disabilities. Through the Grace of God, The Brookwood Community provides an educational environment that creates meaningful jobs, builds a sense of belonging, and hope for adults with disabilities.

To share some hope, you are encouraged to stop by Fellowship Hall on Sunday the 10th and purchase an alternative gift for family and friends, which will support the ministry and residents of Brookwood.

Sharing hope comes in many forms and opportunities. You may also invite friends, neighbors, and families to worship with us during this wonderful season. The choir Christmas Cantata will be during worship Sunday, December 17th. This beautiful music will surely be uplifting and a great reminder of the One true hope we all have. I also encourage you to invite all you know to our Christmas Eve Services at 5:00, 7:00 and 11:00PM.

I pray this season brings you hope and joy, and you can share that hope with others!



Merry Christmas,

"The Pines Sound Team wants YOU!" As a member of the team, you'll work closely with the Pastors and the Music Director to help ensure that our Sunday morning worship is meaningful for everyone in the congregation. If you're interested in learning how to operate the audio and video systems in the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings, please contact Dan Schafer at das.georgia@comcast.net. Free training is provided!



WE WANT YOU!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Pines Youth Celebrates!

- ✓ 15 youth and parents participated in our kickball / picnic / pumpkin carving outing at Bendwood Park.
- ✓ PYCC Rally - 6 of our youth and 3 adult volunteers made the trip to Conroe First Presbyterian Nov 12th for the day. Fun, food, fellowship and faith were shared. Interested in PYCC / Conclaves? See Ron Langston for details.

"And don't let anyone put you down because you're young. Teach believers with your life: by word, by demeanor, by love, by faith, by integrity...And that special gift of ministry you were given when the leaders of the church laid hands on you and prayed - keep that dusted off and in use. Cultivate these things. Immerse yourself in them. The people will all see you mature right before their eyes!"
 1 Timothy 4:12-15

YOUTH EVENTS

Youth Mission Trip - Bake Sale Fund Raiser

Sunday Dec 17th - Setup begins @ 9:00am. Flyer with more details coming.

Youth Christmas Party

Friday, Dec 22nd, 5:30 to 8:00pm @ The Works (2738 Triway)

Food, music, games, white elephant.

Confirmation Kickoff Meeting

Sunday, January 7th, noon to 1:30. Lunch will be served.

Conclaves @ Cho-Yeh - Weekend of Mar 2nd

Signup deadline is January 19th.

Pines Kids



Children's Ministry at Pines

Jesus is the Reason for the Season!

Pick up a family Advent Devotional from the Children's Ministry Information Table located outside room W14. Each family receives one booklet and one Bethlehem scene card. Children place a sticker on the card each night. Begin December 1st on your journey through "Angels We Have Heard On High"!

Families: volunteer and join in the fun and servant spirit at these events!

- Sherwood Christmas Store, 12/2
- Pines Christmas Dinner, 12/2
- CityCentre Rudolph Run, 12/9
- Christmas Cantata, 12/17
- Children's Gift Workshop, 12/10
- Family Christmas Eve Service, 5pm on 12/24



Merry Christmas!

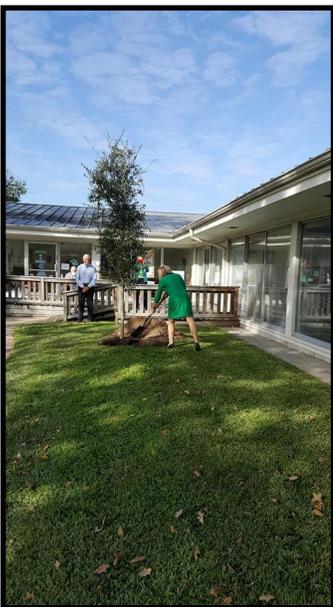
The Witness Corner...

- I was walking down the hall of the rehab facility with the sister of my friend, who was there, recovering from a broken hip. She suddenly stopped and stepped through the partially open door of a room we had just passed. I went back and watched as she spoke softly to the man in the bed, moved his lunch tray out of the way, and asked him if there was anything else she could do for him. When she came back out, I asked her if she knew the man. "No, I just heard him calling out." My friend's sister is in her late 80's and disabled, and yet she heard and responded to the call of a stranger that I hadn't heard.
- Thanksgiving for the many prayer warriors who volunteer to pray for needs in one's life without being asked and then follow up with heartfelt concern.
- Thanksgiving for members of the Pines family who continue to use their gifts and talents in a variety of ways to share God's love.
- Thanksgiving for the arrival of Cheryl Gans in Houston.
- Thanksgiving for the willingness and ability of Belinda Koenig, Bill Willis, Mary Marcotte and Andy Dearman to help our pastoral staff in a myriad of ways.

SESSION MEETING NOTES

The Session held its regularly scheduled meeting on November 27. Here are a few highlights from the meeting:

- Began a study of the book "Canoeing the Mountains – Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory" by Tod Bolsinger of Fuller Theological Seminary
- Approved a motion to have the 2017 Alternative Gift benefit Brookwood
- **Approved a motion to have one worship service at 11:00 a.m. on December 31**
- Heard reports from commissioners to the recent meeting of the Presbytery of New Covenant
- Gave thanks for all those who worked on and participated in recent congregational events, such as the Thankfulness Gathering, Glisten event at City Centre, Family Advent Night and many more



Pines Preschool

At our November 14 Tree Dedication, the preschool planted a cathedral oak tree in honor of retired director, Dorothy Hobbs, and a red bud tree in memory of Emmie Schneider on the big playground. Preschool parent and owner of L-3 Design, Lauren Olenius, donated both trees. We gifted the money we would have used to buy the trees to our flooded families and staff as a Thanksgiving surprise. We hope the church enjoys the trees as they grow and bloom. The preschool is very thankful for our Pines family and all the support you give us!



Merry Christmas from the Music Department!

As we prepare for the Advent and Christmas season, my mind always goes back to one of my favorite Christmas carols, "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." The words in the first verse are very clear as to what happened that night:

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to men, from heaven's all gracious King":
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

As we get wrapped up in the "busyness" of the season, with all the rehearsals, parties, shopping, wrapping, traveling, cooking, baking.....I like to remember the third and most precious verse to me:

And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow,
Look now! For glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing:
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.

So my prayer for all this wonderful season is when we feel we are bent beneath life's crushing load, we will take a moment to rest beside our weary roads, and hear the angels sing.

May the light born in the manger in Bethlehem continue to warm your hearts this Christmas season.

Tim



STEPHEN MINISTRY – The members of Pines have experienced so much shock and loss in the last couple of months – the passing of dear friends and family; the devastation of Hurricane Harvey that cost many of us our homes, cars, and sense of security; the mass shootings in Las Vegas and Sutherland Springs; the resignation of Pastor Sam. The physical exhaustion, psychological trauma, and spiritual confusion may be overwhelming.

Please remember that Pines' Stephen Ministers are specifically trained to walk with you through your crisis. We can help you process your feelings, without judging or telling you what you should do. We can be a listening ear, when you just need someone to talk to as you struggle to return to normal. We can help you cope and begin to heal. We'll stay with you until you get your peace back. It's easier to walk through the dark when you have a trusted friend to shine a light.

If you need compassionate, consistent, confidential support, let us help. Contact Barbara Retzloff at the church or at barbara@pinespc.org, and she'll arrange for a Stephen Minister to meet with you at your convenience.



Poinsettia Signups have begun and will run through December 3rd. Please stop by the Fellowship Hall to sign up for a Poinsettia to help decorate our sanctuary during the Christmas Season. The cost of each Poinsettia is \$10 and they may be taken home after the 11:00 PM Service on Christmas Eve, December 24th.



Looking for Communion set up people.

Do you want to serve the church one time a year? Do you want to work behind the scenes? Consider Communion set up on the first Sunday of the month. There are several openings in 2018. Couples or 2 single people can apply.

Please contact Sue Master - lou.n.sue@comcast.net.

YEAR END TAX PLANNING

Make a bigger impact by donating long-term appreciated securities, including stock, bonds, and mutual funds, directly to Pines. Compared with donating cash, or selling your appreciated securities and contributing the after-tax proceeds, you may be able to automatically increase your gift and your tax deduction.

How does it work?

It's simple and easy. When you donate stock to charity, you'll generally take a tax deduction for the full fair market value. And because you are donating stock, your contribution and tax deduction may instantly increase over 20%¹. Would you prefer to donate bonds or mutual funds? The same benefits apply.

If you would like to take advantage of this tax savings before year-end (or at any time during the year), call Cindy or Alexis in the office, and let them know. They'll send you instructions to give to your stock broker or financial advisor.

Take advantage of a QCD!

If you are at least 70-1/2 years old, and if you have an IRA where you must take Required Minimum Distribution, consider a QCD (qualified charitable distribution), donating all or part of your RMD to Pines (your broker must make the check payable to Pines) – you will reduce your Adjusted Gross Income by the amount of the RMD contribution, and it may also reduce tax on your Social Security income. If you need more information, please contact Peggy Smith, or your financial advisor.

DON'T FORGET OUR YEAR-END DEADLINE FOR DONATIONS!

All cash, checks and stock donations must be in the church office (or for stock, at our brokerage firm) no later than Friday, December 29th at 12:00 p.m. Checks mailed must be postmarked no later than December 30th, 2017.

Thank you for your cooperation!

The children in the 3rd-5th grade Sunday School class as well as the middle school youth want to thank the Pines church family for the \$1830 which was donated in October to purchase school supplies for the New Life School in Guatemala. Judy Kerschner, founder and head of the school, conveys her gratitude in the note below...

"Dear Pines Friends, Thank you very much. I am blessed by the fact that \$1,830 was raised knowing the situation of so many of your members after Hurricane Harvey. Your donation will be a big help buying, in large quantities, the 2018 school supplies needed for the students and teachers.

I am glad Larry Shamp was able to attend the recent graduation. I wish everyone could have done so. This was the first year to have students graduate from kindergarten, 6th, 9th, 12th, and university. Their achievements were made possible because of New Life resources provided by supporters like those from Pines. Most were the age of the cuties in front when they came to us.

GOD BLESS, JUDY"



Join the Houston Tidelanders Chorus and Quartets for...

'Twas The Elf Before Christmas!



Saturday, December 9, 2017 2:00pm

Fishers of Men Lutheran Church

2011 Austin Parkway, Sugar Land, TX 77479

Tickets: Adults: \$15; Children 10 and under: \$10

Sunday, December 17, 2017 2:00pm

MATCH

3400 Main St, Houston, TX 77002

Tickets: General Seating: \$20 Premium: \$35

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION

Visit tidelanders.com or call **713.223.TIDE** (8433)

With Guest Chorus...

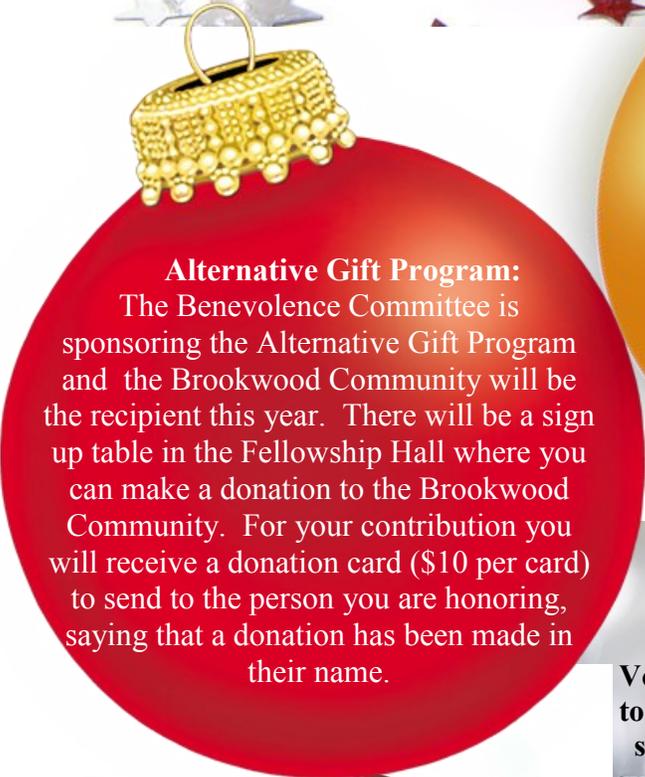


Space City Sound





MISSION CURRENT EVENTS



Alternative Gift Program:

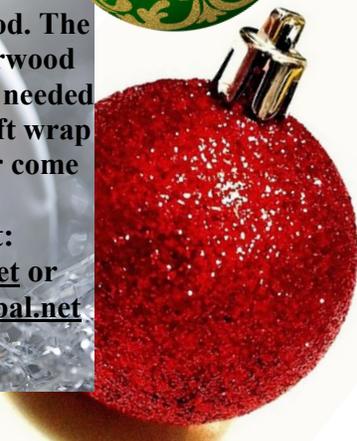
The Benevolence Committee is sponsoring the Alternative Gift Program and the Brookwood Community will be the recipient this year. There will be a sign up table in the Fellowship Hall where you can make a donation to the Brookwood Community. For your contribution you will receive a donation card (\$10 per card) to send to the person you are honoring, saying that a donation has been made in their name.



Missions Committee is in need of volunteers to help with Westside Homeless Partnership Christmas Food Baskets
Volunteers are needed to assemble and delivery food baskets for Westside Homeless Partnership. Please meet in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, Dec 10 following the 11am services. We will assemble and deliver to MDUMC. The baskets will be presented to the WHP clients during their annual Christmas Party. If you need additional information contact Kari Work at via email kwork@mgcinc.net



Sherwood Christmas Store Saturday, Dec. 2



Volunteers needed! We will meet at Pines at 8am to pray, load gifts and caravan to Sherwood. The store is open from 9am – 1pm in the Sherwood gymnasium. Lots of elf minded volunteers needed to help set up the store, assist shoppers, gift wrap and clean up. Come for the entire time or come for an hour. All are welcome!

**For additional information contact:
Kari Work via email kwork@mgcinc.net or
Lesa Smith via email lesa.j.smith@sbcglobal.net**