



**THE PINES PRESS**  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

January 2012

**Year End Financial Notes**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

In order for the church to confirm your tax deductible contributions for 2011 they **must** be received by Friday, December 30 at 12 Noon. Anything received after that date and time will go into the 2012 contributions.

**Regular Pledge or Building Campaign**

In order to avoid confusion, please be sure to place a note in the memo section of your checks designating which pledge account you are making your check to: Regular Pledge 2011 or 2012, or the Building Campaign.

**Stock Donations:**

If you plan to make a year-end gift to the church with stock, please contact Cindy in the church office to notify the church treasurer to expect the donation, and for current instructions for stock gifts, as those instructions have recently changed.

**And finally....**

If you have not already done so, please mail or turn in your **2012 pledge cards** to Cindy in the church office as soon as possible. Every member's participation is important!

The Stewardship Committee

**ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the congregation and corporation has been called for **Sunday, January 8 following the 11:00 a.m. service. The purpose of this meeting is to elect new Officers and Leaders.**

(See more information on page 2)

**CHRISTMAS SERVICE**

**Christmas Eve 5:00 Family Worship Service - Cherubs and Elementary present "Christmas in the Manger"**

**7:00 Candlelight and Communion Service**

**11:00 Candlelight and Communion Service**

**Christmas Day and New Years Day 10:00 am One Service**

*Invite your family and friends to join us for these special times of worship.*

**New Year!  
New Beginnings!  
New Friends!**

**Are you thinking about what the New Year holds for you?  
Are you looking for a place to belong? Do you long for a loving community?**

**Then come and learn more about Pines!**

**Join us for a**

**Visitor & New Member Dinner**

**January 8, 2012**

**5:30-7:30 at the home of Barbara & Steve Retzioff.**

**RSVP to the church office 713-467-2234**

**Or talk to Wayne, Sam or Barbara**

## ***Nominating Committee Presents Slate of Nominees***

The 2011 Pines Nominating Committee has completed its work and offers a slate of nominees for consideration by the congregation. All of those listed have agreed to serve in the positions indicated if elected.

The election of officers will be held during the annual congregational meeting, which is scheduled for Sunday, January 8, 2012, immediately following the 11 a.m. worship service.

At that time, the congregation will elect:

- one Elder to fill a vacancy in the Class of 2013,
- eight Elders to serve in the Class of 2015,
- one Trustee to serve a 3-year term,
- four members of the 2012 Congregational Nominating Committee,
- seven members of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee authorized by the congregation on Oct. 9, 2011, and
- six members of the Memorial Gardens Operating Committee to serve staggered terms. (In future years, two members will be elected each year to serve a 3-year term.)

The following nominees are recommended for the offices indicated:

### Elder, Class of 2013

Phil Johnson

### Elders, Class of 2015

Ed Bowerman  
 Bob Lewis  
 Dana Manion  
 Paul McElroy  
 Valerie Mowell  
 Jerry Paulsen  
 Steve Rose  
 Yohanna Tirayoh

### Trustee, Class of 2015

Mary Cantu

### 2012 Congregational Nominating Committee:

Steve Danbom  
 Rachael Moffett  
 Barbara Potts  
 Richard Steinmetz

### Associate Pastor Nominating Committee

Mark Babineck  
 Susan Cascaden  
 Mike Marcotte  
 Roger Mowell  
 Edith Stinner  
 Craig Walker  
 Julia Wiens

### Memorial Gardens Operating Committee

Class of 2015: Jim Allison  
 Karen MacAllister  
 Class of 2014: Eleanor Loose  
 Susan Schroeder  
 Class of 2013: Jerry Mowell  
 Jerry Haddock

Members of the Nominating Committee—Sharon Timmons, Moderator, and Bill Vislocky, Harumi Asano, Bob Barr, Ron Langston and Diane Wright—thank all members of the congregation who submitted names of potential candidates and supported the committee with prayer as we assessed needs, reviewed candidates and made calls.

Please plan now to attend the annual congregational meeting on January 8 to complete the process of choosing new church officers and leaders by casting your vote.

# A Message From Our Pastor

## KNEELING IN BETHLEHEM

Years ago I bought a book of Christmas Poems written by Ann Weems. The title caught my attention, *Kneeling in Bethlehem*. Unfortunately, I bought the book and set it on my shelf and have never really explored it. But what a title! It captures the very essence of the Christmas story. Bethlehem is a place for kneeling. It is a place for wonder and awe. Wise men bow their knee in Bethlehem, worshipping the newborn King. Shepherds leave their flocks so they can bow their knee. Kneeling in Bethlehem is the ultimate goal of every Christmas worship service, drawing us back to that ancient manger that holds the key to everlasting life. O come let us adore him, for he is Christ the Lord.

Kneeling in Bethlehem took on a new meaning this year. A group from Pines actually visited Bethlehem. The entrance to the Church of the Nativity practically forces you to kneel. It is a small door, so small even our tiniest member had to crouch down to enter. How perfect is that? Somewhere I read they even call the door *The Door of Humility*. Nice.

As we draw near to Christmas, my earnest prayer is that we would all be drawn to enter through the door of humility. My prayer is that we would all bow down and crouch low to enter the presence of our Lord. My prayer is that we would all be found in Bethlehem, and found kneeling. What does that mean? That we would all bow down in our heart of hearts and worship Christ the newborn King.

After my visit to Bethlehem, I tried to find the book which had been sitting on my bookcase. Apparently in moving to our temporary offices that book was boxed up. No luck finding '*Kneeling in Bethlehem*'. But I did find a poem from the book. I offer it to you for your reading and reflection.

**"Each year the Child is born again.**

**Each year some new heart**

**finally hears**

**finally sees**

**finally knows love.**

**And in heaven**

**there is great rejoicing!**

**There is a festival of stars!**

**There is a celebration among the angels!**

**For in the finding of one lost sheep,**

**the heart of the Shepherd is glad, and**

**Christmas has happened once more.**

**The Child is born anew**

**and one more knee is bowed!"**

I hope to see you Christmas Eve, when we all join together for an evening of worship and adoration. I hope to see you Christmas Eve, when we join with the great cloud of witnesses who have found true peace and joy by kneeling in Bethlehem.

*Wayne*



Come join us for the **Youth Sunday Schools** at 9:30 am! For the 6th-8th graders, meet in the Jr. high class (W-13), and for the 9th-12th graders in the Sr. high class (W-14).



### **"2012 Confirmation Class"**

"Confirmation" represents one of the most important events in the journey of a Christian life. Through confirmation, the church renews its commitment to the Christian growth and discipleship of each youth. Each confirmand will have an opportunity to commit to the journey of faith and will experience confirmation as a time of growth, deeper commitment, and joy.

Along with individual mentors, this class will go through a thorough process of examining what it means to be confirmed in the life of the church.

The 2012 Confirmation Class is designed for all the 9th grade students as well as any 10th through 12th grade students who haven't confirmed yet.

The class will begin on Jan. 6 with a kick-off retreat at Camp Allen, and most classes will be held on Sundays from 9:30-10:30 am. For further questions, please contact pastor Sam Jun.

**Jan. 6-7: "Confirmation Opening Retreat" at Camp Allen:** All the confirmation class students and mentors are going to an opening retreat at Camp Allen. Meet at the church at 6 PM on Friday, Jan 7, and come back by 3 PM on Saturday, Jan 8.

**Jan. 8: "Confirmation Class Informational Meeting"** (9:30-10:30 AM) in W-12: Both students (9th grade and up who haven't gone through a confirmation class) and their parents are invited to this meeting.

**Jan. 15 - Feb. 7: "Souper Bowl of Caring Project"** (Look for the Souper Bowl boxes around the church starting from Jan. 15 to Feb. 5): Bring any non-perishable canned goods. All the food collected will be donated to Mission of Yahweh.

**Jan. 14-16: "Celebration" at Camp Cho-Yeh:** For more information, please talk to Brian O'Donnell, the moderator of Celebration for this year. The registration form is outside the youth rooms.

**Jan. 22: "Youth Mission Trips Informational Meeting"** (4-5 PM) in the new high school room. This informational meeting is only for those participants (both students and adults) who have registered. To register, please make contact with Sam Jun. The final deadline for all the applications for the Guatemala trip is on Sunday, Jan. 25. For inquiry, please talk to Sam Jun.



**Happy Birthday to all who are born in January**, and especially, to **Walter Rodenberger (1/28)**, **Haley Baker (1/7)**, **Gia Osso (1/14)**, **Ethan Paulsen (1/22)**, **Sam Kaestner (1/23)**, **Thomas Sanders (1/20)**, **Julie Eberly (1/11)**

## **Keeping T.R.A.C.K as Christian Kids**

Our children are way on track with their participation in several seasonal opportunities featured in the month of December. Merriment was had by all:

The production of "The Not So Silent Night."  
Singing in the Cantata

Writing Christmas cards to our shut-ins

Learning about Advent in Sunday school classes and chapel at the preschool  
Participating in the family Christmas eve service by sharing the story of Christmas complete with costumes from other lands and the three gifts from the kings.



### OPEN HOUSE DATES

January 25, 2012—11:00-Noon—18 months through 4 year olds  
Registration for new families begins at Noon.

January 26, 2012—7:00-8:00 p.m. —Bridge and Kindergarten -  
Curriculum overview with parents.

### PINES REGISTRATION BEGINS IN JANUARY!!!

January 25—Registration begins for new families

February 1-15—Registration for current families



### NEW SCHOOL HOURS BEGINNING FALL 2012!

Bees, Butterflies, Frogs and Rainbow Fish—9:00-12:00 noon

Teddy Bears & Turtles—9:00-12:00 noon with an extended day until 2:00 on Tuesdays

Bridge and Kindergarten—9:00-1:00 p.m. with an extended day until 2:00 on Tuesdays

### PLAYGROUND UPDATE

The west nature playground will open in January after a fence is built around the electrical box and minor landscape work is completed. The children will thoroughly enjoy this long awaited playground and space! It will be for the Ladybug and Owl classes initially, and then the Teddy Bears and Turtles will join them in the spring. Thank you for your unlimited patience with this project—you are the best!

*Have a Blessed Christmas holiday and a Happy New Year!*

*We will see you Wednesday, January 4th! The Pines Preschool Staff Team*



### Family Wellness Night

Sherwood \* Rummel Creek \* Westchester Academy

January 10<sup>th</sup> 2012

5:30 – 7:30 PM

Rummel Creek Elementary

625 Brittmoore \* 713-251-6700

See the Website:

<http://rcehealthylifestyles.pbworks.com>

for more information about the event

**RSVP** on the Website

Invite your friends and neighbors.

**The Rose - Mammogram**

**Nutritionists**

**Health Fair**

**Doctors**

**Blood Mobile**

**Physical Trainers**

**Physical Trainers**

**AND....so much more!**

Dear Pines Friends,

Today is the first day of December! There's something magical about turning the calendar page to December. For many of us the reaction is "How can it be December already?" For me, it was like "OK, I can finally validate all those commercial Christmas decorations that went up in October!"

December has a very special meaning at Sherwood because December brings the Pines Christmas Store! Every year our families wait in joyous anticipation for this event. For our families who struggle to make ends meet every week, this opportunity to shop for family gifts is a godsend, truly God-sent. Please know that your hours and hours of planning, shopping, sorting, setting up and helping really do make a difference in the lives of so many. Like the Magi at the manger, you bring much joy to our little Eagles.

You'll be happy to know that Webster Weiss Spencer IV, aka Drew, first-born of Trip and Stefanie Spencer, made his grand arrival at 11:31 am on Thanksgiving Day! Drew debuted at 7 pounds 12 ounces and is 20 inches tall. The whole Spencer family is doing well and will surely enjoy a special Christmas!

We wish you all a merry Christmas and an abundance of blessings in 2012. God bless us everyone!

Carroll Harkins  
Administrative Assistant  
**Sherwood Elementary**

## PINES FAMILY NEWS

### New Addresses:

The following individuals have a change of address recorded at the church office:

**Geneva Quigley**



**New e-mail address: Karen MacAllister**

Please call the church office for information  
713-467-2234.

### FROM THE CHRISTMAS CANTATA



Six of our graduating seniors formed the 12th Annual Senior Narration Team for the Christmas Cantata on December 11. Pictured are: (front row) Brian O'Donnell, Alex Eberly, Morgan Gravett, Katherine Allison, (back row) Samuel Kaestner and Bradley McClintic with director Emory Glover and 'cellist Cole Kaestner".

### COLUMBARIUM

Our long awaited Columbarium is completed except for canopies over the doors.

We have had two inurnments there and nine niche spaces and 5 stones have been purchased.

You are invited to visit the Prayer Garden often. Two benches will be added when funds are available.

An operational committee is in place and more information can be obtained by contacting the office. Thanks, Liz Schulze

### THANK YOU

To ALL of you who purchased gifts that helped support the Women's Home. Bless you all!

### A Note From the Treasurer

Donors must deliver checks on or by December 30 in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2011. Checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2012 *will not qualify for a charitable contribution deduction in 2011*, even if the check is predated to 2011 or was actually written in 2011. However, under the so-called 'mailbox exception," checks that are written, mailed, and postmarked in 2011 will be deductible in 2011 though they are not received by a church until 2012. "Mailbox exception checks" will be placed onto your 2012 statement. Also, please remember, when giving stock to the church, please call Mike Foster or Cindy Houlihan in advance so they may note your stock is coming in. Most stock transactions do not contain your name in them.

### Stephen Ministry



The year 2012 begins with a training class for our new Stephen Ministers. In the class are Susan Cascaden, Kathy Dearman, Lou Master, Rachel Moffet, and Steve Rose. When they complete their fifty hours of training, they will join sixty-one persons from Pines, as well as hundreds of thousands of Stephen Ministers world-wide who have also been trained. Each Stephen Minister brings to this ministry of caregiving his and her own unique combination of gifts, personality, and character. We pray God's blessings on the members of this class who have answered Jesus' call to this ministry of compassion and service.

If anyone desires to have a Stephen Minister to walk alongside and share your burdens and your joys please contact Barbara Retzloff (713-467-2234). There is a Stephen Minister ready to give confidential one-to-one Christian care.



Phil Wetz was honored at the annual Asa Hunt Lecture as **"POP Lay Minister of the Year."**

He is a lay chaplain who visits weekly at The Methodist Hospital in the Texas Medical Center and also serves on the POP Board of Directors. Phil is a Ruling Elder at Pines Presbyterian Church.



## Greetings From Your Music Ministry

I sincerely hope that all of your holidays were filled with joy and celebration. All of our music personnel thank you for your many cards, comments and support you gave us throughout the season. We always try to provide you with the most worshipful and appropriate music we can throughout the year. The choirs, bells and orchestra work hard every week to do the best possible presentations we can to make your worship more meaningful.

Anyone who would like to become a part of our music ministry here at Pines is always welcome to join any group. You know when we meet and you are always welcome. Let me know if you have any questions as to participation and I will be happy to get you started and placed correctly.

It is a pleasure serving with you here at Pines and I feel that God has richly blessed me by placing me here with you.....Love, Walter

## PINES PROGRESSIVE CHRISTMAS DINNER

The Pines Progressive Christmas Dinner was spectacular on the evening of December 3<sup>rd</sup>. We had outstanding participation with about 160 enthusiastic people, who ate appetizers and the main course at 14 individual homes. Then we progressed to the church for coffee and a delicious array of cakes in all shapes, sizes, and flavors. The fellowship was really flowing in Fellowship Hall.

All of this was possible because we had 14 host couples, who decorated their houses early, and served from 8 to 21 people. We want to thank the following couples for opening their houses, providing a tasty meat course, and serving up great hospitality:

Bankhead	Cantu	Cascaden	Cook	Eberly	Greene	P. Johnson	Jun
A. Otermat	Potts	Retzloff	B. Smith	E. Smith	Stauffacher		

We also need to thank all of the other participants, who provided delicious appetizers or side dishes at each of the homes, or cakes at the Fellowship Hall.

We also want to thank Shirley Bollich, Janet Calhoun, and Frances & Charles Cawthon for setting up a beautiful Fellowship Hall with irresistible cakes, coffee, and colorful tables.

We can't forget the cleanup crew, Lynn D'Antoni, Jerry & Roger Mowell, Nick Bollich and Art Fallon, who worked hard to get the Fellowship Hall ready for Sunday morning.

We especially want to thank the planning committee: Shirley Bollich, Lynn D'Antoni, and Art Otermat for organizing this elaborate event. We should also acknowledge Janet Calhoun and Mary & Steve Wiens, who helped with signups.

And lastly we want to thank everyone, who so enthusiastically participated to make this one of the very special events in the life of Pines Church.

If you missed this year's dinner, we hope you will mark your calendar for Saturday December 1<sup>st</sup> 2012; we want you to also become immersed in this special evening of fellowship.

## DATE FOR EIGHT

It's hard to follow up the wonderful Christmas season, but it is a perfect time to extend that Christmas Spirit by joining us in Date for Eight during Spring 2012. Date for Eight is a great way to meet other Pines members in a casual atmosphere. We form groups of eight people (singles or couples), who meet for an informal potluck dinner once each month in a participant's home. After dinner we discuss our backgrounds: where we grew up, went to school, jobs, marriage, children, activities, and hobbies. If you want to meet people and really get to know them, then join us for good eating and fellowship. Who knows, you may make a new friend for life.

We are starting signups in January for the Spring session. You can sign up for one, two, or three months during February, March, and April. Most people sign up for 3 months, but if you have conflicts during some of these months, you may want to sign up for only one or two months. We generally have about 100 participants, so you are bound to meet someone you did not know.

You can sign up on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, or 22<sup>nd</sup> in Fellowship Hall or call the Pines office at 713-467-2234.

***Celebration #12 is Coming!***

*Celebration #12* is a weekend retreat event for high school students to explore their faith in a loving and supportive environment. Activities during the weekend include music, worship, fellowship and fun. Youth leaders guide the weekend's activities (with the assistance of adult leaders) to provide opportunities for focusing on what it means to be a young Christian in today's world.

*"It was a time to think about my faith."*

Houston Area *Celebration #12* is January 14-16, 2012 and is held at Camp Cho-Yeh, in Livingston, Texas in a beautiful forest setting. The entire weekend cost is \$95 including all meals and lodging at the Camp (and you won't need any spending money). Ask anyone who has been to *Celebration* – it's **WAY COOL!**

*"Everyone there made me feel so important."*

If you're looking for a fun way to explore your personal faith journey with other friends, ***Celebration #12*** is for you. If you need more information or an application, get in touch with Trish McElroy at 281-277-1706 or [p.mcelroy@windstream.net](mailto:p.mcelroy@windstream.net). Space is limited so get your application in soon for *Celebration #12*. The application deadline is January 4, 2012. Check it out at our website: [www.houstonareacelebration.org](http://www.houstonareacelebration.org)

*"My mom made me go, but it turned out to be  
the best weekend of my whole life!"*

*Any high school youth can come...invite your friends!*