



December 2013

Let Your Light Shine!

THE BEACON

**Pine Street Baptist Church:
Where "Welcome" is not Just a Greeting, but a Way of**

Upcoming Dates

- December 4
Missions Worship
6:45 pm
- December 6
Lottie Moon Banquet
6:15 pm
- December 8
VCU Horn Choir
11:00 am
- Youth Meeting - noon
- December 9
VCU Exam Break
9:00 pm - 11:00 pm
- December 14
Children's Christmas
Store - 1:30-3:00 pm
- December 15
Choir Musical
11:00 am
- December 19
Senior Dinner - 6:00 pm
- December 22
Sunday School Party
9:30 am

The familiar Christmas carol, "I'll Be Home For Christmas" is heard regularly at this time of the year. Recorded in 1943 by Bing Crosby, it became a top ten hit. It has since gone on to become a Christmas standard sung by various artists. The song is sung from the point of view of an overseas soldier during WWII, writing a letter to his family. In the message, he tells the family that he will be coming home, and to prepare the holiday for him including requests for "snow", "mistletoe", and "presents by the tree." The song ends on a melancholy note, with the soldier saying *"I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my dreams."*

In the Gospel of Luke we read the story of Jesus' birth at Christmas. Because of the Roman census, Joseph had to return to Bethlehem, his home town. Luke writes,

"Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn."

Joseph and Mary came home but there was no place to stay. The inns we are told were full. They were literally on the streets. They were homeless. Maybe they stood on a corner and held a sign that read, "pregnant and need a place to stay." Perhaps they went to the local synagogue only to find it closed. What we do know, however, is they ended up staying in a stable. The Bible does not tell us how they ended up in a stable. Traditionally, we think of the inn keeper as the one who offered the stable.

As we prepare for Christmas during this season of Advent, we are invited to make room for this homeless couple and birth that is about to take place. Our lives can become crowded this time of the year as we prepare to celebrate Christmas. Family, work, church, friends, and the like will fill our Christmas calendar. There will be a lot of appointments to keep. However, let us not forget to make room for the one who is to be born. Christmas can come and go, even for Christians, and Jesus have no place to stay. May we make room for him this Christmas by opening our hearts to him and the needs of others. May Jesus be home at Christmas in us.

Philip

Christmas Dreams

We all dream a bit at Christmas time, having a night or two when visions of sugar-plums dance in our heads. We all dream of that picture-perfect Christmas, the kind we see so beautifully printed on all the Christmas cards. I recently went through some of our Christmas cards from previous years, looking at the pictures on the front. I found exactly what I expected to find: the light of a star over Bethlehem, stockings hanging over the fireplace, a horse-drawn sleigh, mother and child, a Christmas tree decked out in full splendor. You know the cards I'm talking about, because you get the same ones.

These may be images of the picture-perfect Christmas we all aspire to have, but how realistic are they? Our American culture and media load our dreams with false expectations of family harmony and good cheer. The card shops and shopping malls define for us what the "perfect" Christmas should be. In the weeks leading up to Christmas, many who worship in our congregations will invest a great deal of time, energy, and money in trying to achieve that picture-perfect Christmas.

But is the picture-perfect Christmas just another dream, a dream that leads us away from the realities of the first Christmas, let alone the one we celebrate this very year. I noted something else about those old Christmas cards. There were no images of an elderly widow sitting in sadness...empty, alone, and feeling abandoned. There were no images of a panhandler trying to collect enough money for a cup of coffee, a hamburger, or maybe even a beer. I saw no images of crooked Christmas trees (you know, the kind that real people have), no pictures of hungry men and women standing in a soup line, and no children whose only gift was the hope that next year would be better. These are things you don't see on a Christmas card. These are the images of the less-than-picture-perfect Christmas, but they are images of Christmas nonetheless, the very real, difficult images of the struggles far too many people face, even at Christmas.

As Christians we need to dream, and we need to dream big. So what are your Christmas dreams this year? Do you have one? We all need to have a Christmas dream, and in that dream we need to be told some of the same words Joseph was told. Our Christmas dream needs to include the words, "Do not be afraid." Borrowing from the poetic words of Henry Van Dyke, may our Christmas dream go something like this: Do not be afraid...to see that other men and women, regardless of their race, religion, or culture are just as real as we are, and try to look behind their faces to their hearts...to stoop down and consider the needs and desires of little children...to remember the weakness and loneliness of people growing old...to stop asking how much our friends love us, and ask ourselves whether we love them enough...to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world – stronger than hate, stronger than evil, and stronger than death. This can be our Christmas dream. Dare I say that this should be our Christmas dream, as unconventional, as uncomfortable, as unpopular, and as less-than-picture-perfect it may be. Merry Christmas.



"Be the Light" General Fund Giving Report

Needed to Date:	\$27,704
<u>Given to Date</u>	<u>\$27,241</u>
Variance:	- \$463



Christmas at Pine Street

December 4

Family Worship - Our Christmas Mission - 6:45 pm

December 6

Lottie Moon Banquet - 6:15 pm
Speakers: Jerry and Kathy Parker

December 8

Virginia Commonwealth University Horn Choir - 11:00
am

December 11

Movie Night - The Gift of the Magi
6:45 pm

December 14

Children's Christmas Store
1:30 - 3:00 pm

December 15

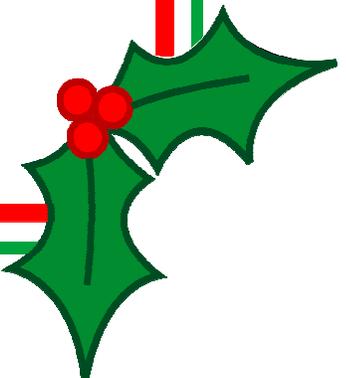
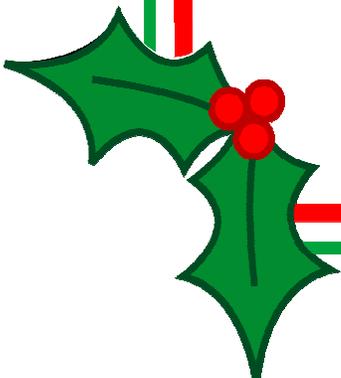
Christmas Cantata - 11:00 am

December 18

"Worship 100 Night" based on Psalm 100
Christmas Fellowship
6:45 pm

December 22

Joint Sunday School Party - 9:30 am
Candlelight Worship Service
5:00 pm



Children's Christmas Store

December 14, 2013

1:30-3:00 PM

All children ages 3-12 are invited to attend the Oregon Hill Baptist Center annual Christmas Store! This is the place where you can get cool gifts for your parents & siblings. Come and browse and then take your selections to the gift-wrapping station. Parents and children enjoy yummy refreshments while they wait. AND it is all FREE!! Arrive anytime between 1:30 & 2:45, no appointment necessary.

If you would like to DONATE new or "like-new" items for our children to choose from then just give them to Jennifer T.

A Special Thanksgiving Thank You

A special thanks to all who contributed to the Oregon Hill Center's Thanksgiving ministry by food donations. 66 households were served with each receiving food for Thanksgiving and a \$10 grocery gift card.



Thanks to everyone who helped with our annual Thanksgiving meal for the homeless. Once again this was a great way to minister to some of our most neediest neighbors.

A special thank you to all who provided food and helped with the Humphrey Home Thanksgiving meal. 17 residents from the home enjoyed a great dinner on Novem-

VCU Exam Breakfast

December 9

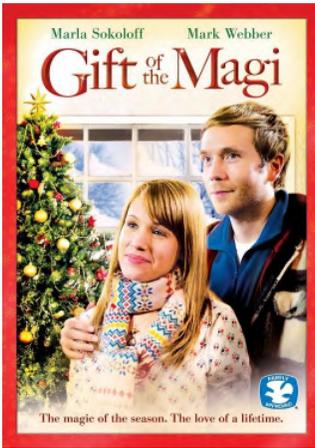
9:00 pm - 11:00 pm

The church will once again be providing a pancake supper for the VCU students during exam week. Volunteers are needed to help prepare and serve the students. We've had great success in the past. Let Jennifer Turner know if you would like to



The **Christmas Card Post Office** is now open! Bring in your Christmas cards for church members and drop them in the mail slot. The cards will be "delivered" to the recipient's "mailbox." Cards will be available at the post office, if you need them. The post office is free of charge, but please consider donating the postage money you save to the church's General Fund. Thank you!





Christmas Movie Night

Wednesday, December 11

6:45 pm

The Gift of the Magi

December Birthdays

- 3: Nancy Jernigan
Terry Donohue
Della Smith
- 4: Flynn Townsend
- 5: Debbie Thacker
- 7: Diane Pinder
- 9: David Johnston
- 10: Belinda Alvis
- 12: Karen Jarrell
- 15: Mike O'Donnell
- 18: Mary Wright
Dot Wood
Charles Hairfield Jr.
- 22: Elizabeth Shifflet
- 23: Zora Garretson
- 27: Chris Lail
Michael Jernigan
- 28: Linda Johnston
Claudia Neal
- 29: Mindy Herring

Anniversaries

- 29: Allen and Susan Townsend

I would like to thank everyone for all the cards and prayers during my wife's illness and death. I want to thank Philip for the visits to the hospital and to our home. I especially want to thank Terry Donohue for her help with my precious wife at our home and visits to the hospital.

I lost my best friend and soul mate. We had 48 wonderful years together.

Sincerely,

Sonny Wesson

I would like to take time to thank my church family for all the cards, prayers, and visits during my stay in the hospital and rehab. I also want to thank Philip for all he did for me.

Virginia Knighton

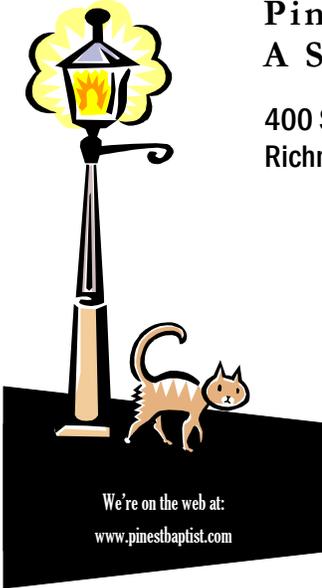
Contributions were made to the Properties Endowment in memory of:

Billy Wells

Contributions were made to the Ministries Endowment in memory of:

*Clara, Robert, and James Hagan, Bill Berry,
Gladys Wesson*

Contributions were made to the General Fund in memory of Carl Groome



**Pine Street Baptist Church
A Steadfast Fellowship of Grace**

400 South Pine Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RICHMOND, VA
Permit No. 2138

**Candlelight Worship Service
Sunday, December 22 at 5:00 pm**

Beacon Update

Beginning January 1, 2014 the church's newsletter, The Beacon, will be distributed at church on the last Sunday of each month. The Beacon will also be sent electronically by email. If, however, you cannot attend regularly or you do not have access to email, then please contact the church office and we will make sure that one is mailed to you as it has always been.

We are making this change to be better stewards of our resources as we seek to further God's Kingdom. If you have any questions then please call the church office at 644-0339.

