



THE NEWSLETTER OF PINE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

“What’s your decision?” Undoubtedly we have all been asked this question at some point in our lives. Some decisions are simple, like choosing what to order off a menu in a restaurant, although some people struggle with that. More serious decisions, like who you will marry, a job change, beginning a family, or making a huge purchase take a little more time; sometimes a lot of time.



As Christians and the church how do we make our decisions? That is, what influences our thought process, guides us in our thinking, and leads us in making a decision? No person or church makes a decision in a vacuum. We are shaped and influenced by something. In Paul’s letter to the church at Rome, the apostle addressed this issue. Paul encouraged the Christians to present their entire lives as an offering to God. Paul then went on to write, *“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”* For Paul, Christians and the church are called to discern God’s will in making decisions.

Discernment is a time-honored practice in the Christian tradition. In essence, discernment is a decision-making process that honors the place of God's will in our lives. It is an interior search that seeks to align our own will with the will of God in order to learn what God is calling us to. Every choice we make, no matter how small, is an opportunity to align ourselves with God's will.

During the course of the next year I am asking that we begin to intentionally seek to discern God’s will for our church. I will be working with the church leadership to engage in a process of discernment as we seek God’s direction for our congregation; both immediate and long term. What is God calling us to be as Pine Street Baptist Church? The journey of discernment is about walking with God and one another in a prayerful spirit of letting go of our personal agendas and allowing God to lead us into his.

Too often as Christians and the church we leave God out of our decision making process. We decide what we think is best and then ask God to bless it. Discernment is about allowing God to show us his direction and then join God in what God is calling us to do. My prayer is that we all will be intentional about discerning God’s will for our lives as individuals as well as a congregation. When we surrender our wills over to God, there is no telling where God might lead us.

Philip

“Aim at Heaven and you will get Earth thrown in: aim at Earth and you will get neither.”

– C.S. Lewis, *The Joyful Christian*

NEEDED FOR OUR HOMELESS MINISTRY:



WALMART, ALDI, & FOOD-LION GIFT CARDS: to be used toward purchasing snack bag items for homeless

GLOVES: Waterproof & knit GLOVES (men & women)

HATS: Solid Color (black or Navy blue) for winter

SCARVES: Solid Color Scarves (men)

SOCKS: Warm (men & women)

SWEAT SHIRTS (men & women) - especially hoodies

LONG JOHN PANTS & SHIRTS (men & women)

BLANKETS: (used, but clean are fine)

SLEEPING BAGS: (used, but clean are fine)

HAND & FOOT WARMERS: (Walmart, Target, Dicks, Bass Pro Shop, etc.)



NEEDED FOR OTHER MINISTRIES:

WALMART, ALDI, FOOD-LION Gift Cards - to supplement food for Food Pantry & other food/snack needs for OHBC programs.

One Day Unlimited GRTC Bus Pass - (\$3.50 each) Can be purchased at Kroger Customer Service Counters





Congratulations to David Johnston on his promotion to Captain in the Hanover Fire Department.

Follow the Yellow Brick Road...With the VIP'S

Dorothy Gale of Kansas, like so many girls her age, dreams of what lies over the rainbow. After a tornado whisks her away to the magical land of Oz, she starts her quest to find the mighty Wizard who has the power to send her home. This winter, join Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tinman, the Cowardly Lion and Toto on their adventure down the yellow brick road – but watch out for the nasty Wicked Witch! Featuring classic songs like “Ding Dong the Witch is Dead,” “If I Only Had a Brain,” and “Over the Rainbow,” this charming musical is sure to warm audiences and remind them that there really is no place like home!



Join the VIP trip to see The Wizard of Oz at the Steward School on Sunday, March 17. A sign up sheet will be posted and payment is due when signing up. \$11 for seniors.

February Birthdays

- 3: Carissa Downer
- 6: Jessi Vaught
- 10: Rose Floyd
- 11: Hope Powers
- 15: Brandy Grove
- 20: Angie Guill



February Anniversaries

- 21: Beth and Alex Wang
- 25: Mr and Mrs. Raleigh Robinson

Envelope Offering (through January 20)

Budget: \$7851
Given: \$6314
Variance: -\$1537

*Don't Forget to Make Up Your Offerings
from our snow Sundays!*



Enemies Included

With all of the Valentines, chocolate, and flowers, February is often referred to as the month of love. So, I want us to think about love for a few minutes, and hopefully longer. I want us to think about love from a perspective we do not often address, but which has serious implications in our day and time.

We make our friends. We also make our enemies; people don't just walk up to us and say, "Hey, I'm going to be your enemy." We even let other people convince us who our enemies should be. In the days of Jesus there were certainly those who were labeled as enemies. There was the enemy of Rome. There was the enemy of competing religious groups. There was the enemy of the person right next door.

But the most important thing about the days of Jesus was Jesus himself. And Jesus comes along and says, "I know you've heard about loving your neighbor and hating your enemy. But here's what I want you to do instead. I want you to love your enemies too, and even pray for them, because in doing so you will be behaving like children of God are supposed to behave. After all, God sends rain on both the good and the evil."

In the past few years we have experienced enough division and hatred to last a lifetime, and enemies have been fabricated in places where they just don't exist. Isn't it time for a change? I don't know who you have labeled as an enemy, opponent, antagonist, rival, or adversary in your life. It might be your next-door neighbor, a family member, an entire nation, or a religious group. But with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the conviction of the instructive words of Jesus, let us give serious consideration as to whether these people and groups are truly enemies, and let us pause to pray for them.

And for what should we pray? It would be so easy to pray that our enemies would somehow change and become exactly like us, because we certainly wouldn't want to be like them. But if change is needed, it is likely within our own hearts. And we would do well to remember another teaching on prayer, when Jesus told of a Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like the thieves, adulterers, and tax collectors. But Jesus said that it was a tax collector who prayed, "Have mercy on me, a sinner," who went home justified.

"Love your enemies," Jesus said. And if we can love our enemies, maybe they will cease to be our enemies. This is the power of love. It is the power of God, for God is love. We all have this power within us, but we must choose to use it. Courageously and clearly, leaving no doubts for misunderstanding or misinterpretation, Jesus says, "Choose love."

As I write these words I recall a portion of the lyrics to U2's song *Magnificent*: *Only love can leave such a mark. Only love can heal such a scar. Only love unites our hearts.* Valentines, chocolate, and flowers are nice (I really enjoy dark chocolate), but they are mere tokens compared to the love Jesus had, and wants us to have, for the world . . . enemies included.

Clint

