PRESPRESS 4





Spring Branch Presbyterian Church 1215 Campbell Rd | Houston, TX 77055



From the desk of Pastor Savannah Goodman...

Dear Spring Branch Presbyterian,

It's officially advent season! It's the time when Christmas music is on the radio and stores are full of Christmas-themed items and decorations. There are ads everywhere trying to convince you to buy "the perfect gift" that they are relentlessly advertising to everyone... In other words, it is a busy time for commercial America and it's a busy time for everyone, churches included!

There is always a lot to do – Christmas Eve plans to make, houses or apartments to decorate, meals to plan, traditions to carry out, gifts to buy – the list goes on and on... It can be a season of stress and being overwhelmed, but also a season of joy, love, and hope. I found this poem, "Gifting Baskets" by Annie Dougherty, that resonated with me and reminded me of how this community loves and cares for one another:

> I look at the weave of the basket, and think of the weave of our lives-The ins and outs, the ups and downs, the circles of families and friends. I think of each beginning, and each and every end. *I see the rhymes and colors, the entwining of our dreams.* I touch strands of strains and struggles, all present in every seam. Told are the honored memories, in folds of joys and sorrows, The braids of our lifetime, to handle and behold. I touch the emptiness, of the center hollow, Stir the lightness of air, knowing it will fill with tomorrow, The expressions of love and care. So, I look at the weave of the basket, and think of the weave of our ties-The straw that touched our manger, the reeds that laced our lives.

I hope that the words of this poem resonate with you during this advent season. And, I hope that you are able to approach the ups and downs of this advent season with joy, love, hope, and determination.

In great anticipation and joy, Pastor Savannah

Spring Branch Presbyterian Church Celebrate Advent and Christmas with Us!





Sunday, December 1, 10:50 am 1st Sunday of Advent Worship "The Unexpected Deal"

Thursday, December 5, 5:00 pm "Happy Birthday, Jesus" Messy Church Come for games, crafts, music, and activities.

Sunday, December 8, 10:50 am

2nd Sunday of Advent Worship
"The Unexpected Message"

Wednesday, December 11, 5:30 pm

"Noel" Academy Christmas Pageant in the Sanctuary A light reception will immediately follow in the Breezeway.





Sunday, December 15, 10:50 am

3rd Sunday of Advent Worship Choir Cantata

Sunday, December 15, 6:00 pm

Blue Christmas Worship in the Sanctuary "The Unexpected Tears"

Wednesday, December 18, 6:00 pm

Advent Party in the Fellowship Hall Come for food, fellowship, an ornament exchange, music, and crafts!

Sunday, December 22, 10:50 am

4th Sunday of Advent Worship "The Unexpected Songs of Elizabeth and Mary"

Tuesday, December 24, 6:00 pm

Candlelight Communion Christmas Eve Service Cookies & Hot Chocolate in the Breezeway at 5:30 pm "The Unexpected Arrival"





Because December is such a wonderful time of giving, we have two "Missions of the Month" for December – The Angel Tree Program and the Presbyterian Children Homes and Services (PCHAS) Ornament Tree.

For 2.7 million children in the U.S. their lives may be filled with the abandonment, loneliness, and shame that comes from having a mom or dad in prison. For many, it may also include following their parents

down the same destructive road to incarceration. Angel Tree[®], a program of Prison Fellowship, reaches out to the children of prisoners and their families with the love of Christ. This unique program gives us an opportunity to share God's love by helping to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the families of prisoners at Christmas time.

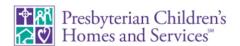
Every year, our church receives the names of about 20 children who live in the zip codes around our church. Through contact with each of the families, we determine items that the children need or want. In addition to two gifts designated from the parent, each child receives a gift from SBPC. Each family also receives a generous food basket. We will be collecting nonperishable foods for these baskets, so watch for collection bins outside the church office. This year we have 24 children and nine families! Tags will be available beginning on Sunday, December 8th, before and after worship, as well as on Wednesday, December 11th, at dinner. Be sure to pick up one or two! Here's what you do: select an angel tag (or two). Purchase the gift (in the \$25 price range). Wrap the gift, sticking the tag to the front of the package. Please return the gift to the church office no later than Sunday, December 15th.

We are collecting food for Angel Tree Food Baskets, to be shared with families this Christmas. Here are some suggestions:

- Peanut Butter & Jelly
- Mac & Cheese
- Cereal

- Canned evaporated milk
- Chili or Ravioli
- Canned fruits, vegetables, soups
- Spaghetti, Pasta Sauce
- Canned Tuna or Chicken
- Any kid friendly, easy to prepare foods

So, watch the ads, or just pick up one extra item the next time you go to the store. Your gifts will be much appreciated. Please direct gift questions to Laurie Mitchell and food questions to Linda Crawford.



Our other "Mission of the Month" is the PCHAS Ornament Tree. Instead of buying toys for the needy children at Christmas time, we opt to give monetary donations. These generous gifts allow PCHAS to serve approximately 5000 children and families each year. During Advent time,

we hang ornaments on a Christmas tree. Each of the ornaments has a PCHAS tag attached with a suggested donation amount. You take the ornament home with you and leave the donation in the basket provided. We will donate the entire amount to PCHAS at the end of the month. (If you pay by check, please make checks payable to SBPC and put "PCHAS Ornament Tree" in the memo line.)

December Mission Updates & Opportunities

Seafarers' Boxes Updates and Thanks – Thank you to everyone who participated in our annual packing and wrapping of the Seafarer's Boxes on Sunday, December 1st. We had a total 158 of boxes that were delivered to the Houston International Seafarers' Center. A special thanks to Laurie Mitchell who coordinates this mission initiative.



Blood Drive Update – Thank you to everyone who participated in the Blood Drive on Sunday, December 1st! We had 12 participants and collected 6 units of whole blood.

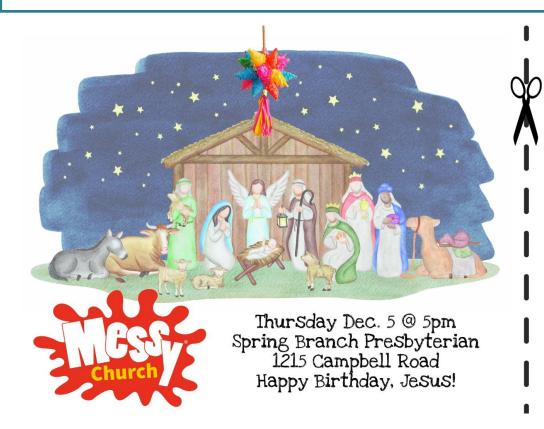
Peace and Global Witness Offering – Thank you to everyone who gave to the PC(USA) Peace and Global Witness Offering this year. We received \$5,392, which is a significant increase from last year! Spring Branch as a congregation chose to give our local portion of this offering to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.



The Christmas Joy Offering reflects that God is with us, through the generous gifts that support church leaders among us, retired, present and future, who have pointed us to God. Even as we support our current and former church leaders through the Assistance Program through the Board of Pensions, God is calling new leaders for our church and world, through the ministry of Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color—offering students the means for a brighter future and enhanced opportunities to use their talents and skills to serve God, the Church and the world for years to come. This offering will be collected on December 22nd and 24th.

Ways to Give:

- Through your congregation
- Text CHRISTMASJOY to 91999 to learn more or donate
- Donate by credit card online at pcusa.org/christmasjoy



November's Messy Church had over 70 people there, learning about God with games, crafts, and snacks.

Tell those in your life
that can't sit still,
that enjoy games,
and are creative
that there are many ways to
discover God and celebrate His
love.

Join friends and congregation members on Sunday, December 8th right after worship to celebrate our December birthdays. We will have light snacks and birthday treats. See you then!



Wednesday Night Supper



Taking reservations during the pandemic helped us to reduce food waste in the kitchen and improved our meal planning. We plan to continue the reservation process, but will also take walk-ins as long as we have extra food to serve. Kay Craig has taken over the reservation process, so, if you'd like to attend, please email Kay at kay@craig-heidt.com.

Dec. 4 — Cranberry Chicken

Dec. 11 — Barbeque *Kay Craig & Betty Magnuson*

Dec. 18 — Holiday Party

Buffet

Advent Party

Prices for the supper are as follows:

Adults (age 13 & up) \$5.00

Children (ages 1-12) \$2.00

Family w/children ages 1-12 \$12.00

(immediate family only please)

We are now accepting credit card payments at Wednesday Night Supper!





Children's Sunday School Class meets 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month at 9:30am in the Children's classroom in The Gathering Place.



Presbyterian Women this Month



PW at a Glance

PW UNWIND will meet on 12/2 at 6:00 PM at Benihana (9707 Westheimer).

PW BOARD MEETING on 12/4 at 10:15 a.m. (Conference Room)

THE HORIZONS Evening Bible study using **ZOOM** will be on Tuesday, <u>12/10</u> at 7:00 p.m.

PW DAY CIRCLE meeting on 12/11 at 9:30 a.m. in the Conference Room.

If you would like to join by Zoom, please contact Patti Nanney for an invitation. We will have a salad luncheon in the Fellowship Hall afterwards. Please bring a salad to share.

Lesson 4 Video: www.springbranchpres.org/adult-education/presbyterian-women/let-justic-roll-down.

ZIP TRIPs and **HAPPY HANDS** will not meet in December.

BIBLE STUDY BOOKS for 2024-2025 (*Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation*) are available in the Church Office. The cost is \$10.

PW DIRECTORIES are available in the Church Office and Narthex.

Bible Study Using Zoom: December 10th at 7:00 p.m.

Lesson 4 of *Let Justice Roll Down* will be discussed by the group of women using Zoom on Tuesday, December 10th, at 7 p.m. All SBPC women are welcomed in this Bible study group through videoconference! Contact Sarah Powell at mrspowelltobe@yahoo.com to receive the Zoom invitation to join the meeting.





Happy Hands will not meet in December because of the holidays. We'll meet again on Wednesday, January 22, 2025. In December, we will deliver 60 warm hats to Cedarbrook Elementary. If you have made hats, scarves, or blankets to be donated, please bring them to the Church Office and Doris Wright will get them delivered.



Poinsettias!

We will have poinsettias for purchase again this year! You can place your order in the Church Office, online at this <u>form</u>, or by emailing <u>ethan@springbranchpres.org</u>, today through Sunday, December 22nd! They are a beautiful way to bring color and brightness to the Church throughout the Advent Season! What a lovely way to honor your loved ones, or to have a

beautiful remembrance of those who are no longer with us. Don't forget to bring your poinsettia home after the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Please remember to indicate who you are honoring, and/or remembering, with your payment of \$10.00 to SBPC. You can mail your payment to the Church Office or place it in the offering plate on Sunday mornings. Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy for you and your family this coming Advent Season.

Dust off Your Halos – It's Time for Our Annual Angel Tree Christmas Program



The Angel Tree Prison Ministries is a program to support the children of incarcerated parents during the holiday season. Spring Branch Presbyterian will receive the names of about 20 children in November, and our church works to find out their needs from the custodial parent. Then, on December 8th and 11th, you will have opportunities to select a child or children to purchase a gift for. The gift should be in the \$20 range. It should be wrapped and returned to the office with the sticker attached to the wrap. The deadline for returning the gifts is Sunday, December 15th.

In addition to the gifts, each family receives a basket of food. Please pick up some kid friendly non-perishable food from the store over the next month and we will begin to set it aside for our Angel Tree families. Please direct gift questions to Laurie Mitchell and food questions to Linda Crawford.



REIMBURSEMENTS DEADLINE APPROACHING...

Please turn in your personal reimbursements no later than December 15th.

Contact Jorida at jorida.vakiari@springbranchpres.org



"Unexpected Gifts"

As part of our Advent events, we are having an Advent Party on December 18th, at 6:00 PM. Wednesday Night Supper is part of the fun, and Fellowship is dishing up a Holiday Party Buffet! We will have several crafts for the children to take home, an ornament exchange game, and a special reading of the Advent Story by Bob Deutsch. We hope to see you there!

ADVENT PARTY CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT EXCHANGE



Please bring an ornament, either new, one of your favorite or purchased from the PCHAS Ornament Tree to exchange at the Advent Party. The ornament should be gift wrapped (or in a bag) with no gift tag. Make this fun, and everyone bring one!



Volunteers are needed to help with Prayground on Sunday during worship from Children's Moment to the last hymn. This will involve Pre-K and Kindergarten children. There will be a story, coloring pages, or possibly a craft.

Volunteers are also needed to help with Youth Sunday School on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month. Training and curriculum are available.

If you feel called to help in either of these endeavors, please contact Jacquie Ballesteros at 713-305-1114 or <u>jballesteros1103@gmail.com</u>.

Craft Workshop December 8 – Shirts & Cards

We will have a dual workshop on Sunday, Dec. 8 from 2-4 PM in the fellowship hall.

One craft will be "reverse Tie-dye" which uses bleach water to make a design on fabric. Betty's daughter, Jesssica will be leading this. You will need to bring a shirt of some sort.



She did hers on a long-sleeved flannel shirt, but you could use a t-shirt or other style. Make sure the fabric is NOT fade-proof; it will not bleach out. The item needs to be washed and dried with no fabric softener or dryer sheet. Jessica will bring some stencils, but you can bring some also.





Kay will be leading the other craft which is <u>simple</u> greeting cards and gift tags. You don't need to bring anything for this craft.









Ignite the Passion, Spart the Connection, Kindle the Flame



Please don't forget to turn in your Pledge Card for 2025. You can find one in the Narthex, Church Office, or Parlor. For a digital copy of the Pledge Card, please visit www.springbranchpres.org/stewardship. Please mail or email pledge cards to Jorida Vakiari (giving@springbranchpres.org or jorida.vakiari@springbranchpres.org).

Bake an Extra Dozen or So Cookies This Season



As you are baking for family and friends this holiday season, please consider baking a few extra cookies or other baked goods for our December Fellowship events. Please let Laurie Mitchell (galamitchell@comcast.net) know if you are willing to help.

Attention all young adults! All college-aged to mid-thirties, up and coming professionals are welcome!



You are invited to roller skating night with Pastor Savannah Goodman at Dairy Ashford Roller Rink (1820 South Dairy Ashford, Rd., Houston, TX 77077) on Friday, 12/20, at 6:00 PM. The church will cover the price of admission and roller skate rental for each person. Bring money for food and drinks. If you need childcare, please email Pastor Savannah Goodman (savannah@springbranchpres.org) by Friday, 12/6, at 5:00 PM, so she can make the necessary childcare

Goodman (savannah@springbranchpres.org) to RSVP (so she can get an accurate head count) and/or if you any questions. We look forward to connecting with you then!

You are invited to the Young Adult Breakfast Club with Pastor Savannah Goodman at Buzz & Bites (1444 Blalock Road, Suite G, Houston, TX 77055) on Sunday, 12/15, at 9:00 AM. The Young Adult

Breakfast Club will meet monthly for a time of fellowship and connection. Childcare is available at the church. We will meet at the church at 9:00 AM to carpool. Bring \$5 and the church will cover the rest! We look forward to connecting with you then! Please email Pastor Savannah Goodman (savannah@springbranchpres.org) with any questions.





Children's Chime Choir: The Chime Choir meets in the Sanctuary at 9:30 AM on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month. This is a chance for elementary aged children to get to ring chimes as part of Worship. We are excited to continue this new adventure! Please contact Megan Hogg (megan1661@yahoo.com) for additional details.





DECEMBER

SPRING BRANCH PRESBYTERIAN ACADEMY

2024

Come all ye faithful friends and hear our Academy Kids perform a joyful Christmas Musical Pageant. Wednesday, December 11th at 5:30 PM. Refreshments to follow.



Hark! THE HERALD CHILDREN SING, GLORY TO OUR NEWBORN KING.



In the Spotlight...

This year's Halloween Trunk or Treat was again a success. Special thanks to the Police Department and everyone who participated to make it a fun and spooktacular! night for our the kids.











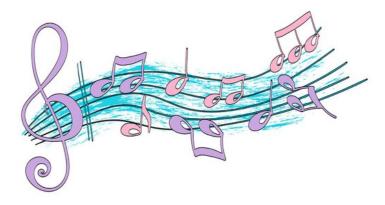


Santa's visit to the Academy is on Friday, Dec. 6th, 10:30am -12pm. Come on by and say hello.



Academy Holiday Closures are - Dec 25th, 26th & Jan 1st. Holiday care is open for the SBISD kids. Dear Spring Branch Family,

As we continue to grow and strengthen our community, I am writing to share some exciting news and to ask for your support for a vital part of our church life: our music program.



Music has always been a cornerstone of our worship and fellowship. It lifts our spirits, binds us together, and enriches our experience of faith. Our talented choir, dedicated musicians, and vibrant musical events contribute significantly to the worship experience and help us express our devotion in profound ways.

To continue providing the high-quality music program that we all cherish, we are seeking your support. The funds necessary to keep the rich and meaningful quality of worship services do not currently meet our budget.

The church choir has seen a lot of loss in volunteers and must bring in extra singers to help with Sunday morning worship and other events. Currently, we are looking for singers and would love for you to join us. If you have friends or know of anyone looking to join a choir, please let me know.

We plan to organize special music events and performances that will not only uplift our congregation, but also reach out to the wider community. We have a community concert involving Spring Branh ISD students and other community members. We are also hosting *Carols in the Park*, and have other events in their planning stage.

Your financial contributions are crucial in helping us achieve these goals. We encourage you to consider donating to the music program fund. Whether you can give a one-time gift, or set up a recurring donation, your generosity will have a lasting impact on our worship and community outreach life.

If you have any questions, or would like more information on how to contribute, please feel free to contact Gabe Perez at musicdirector@springbranchpres.org.

Thank you for your continued support and for being an integral part of our church family. Together, we can ensure that our music program remains a source of inspiration, joy, and connection for all.

BEAUTIFY THE CHURCH



Would you like to beautify the Sanctuary on Sunday mornings while honoring a loved one or commemorating a special occasion? The 2024 Flower Sign-Up Calendar is located in the Narthex. If you are currently worshiping from home, but would still like to sponsor flowers for a Worship Service, you may signup digitally by using this form: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E084CABAC2BA1FA7-46865119-2024, or email

jorida.vakiari@springbranchpres.org. The cost per arrangement is \$65.00. Special arrangements vary and should be requested EARLY! Checks should be written to SBPC and mailed to the Church Office

Did you know that you can help the church by doing your grocery shopping at Randalls? By giving our Good Neighbor Number (1140) at the checkout line when you shop with your Remarkable Card, a portion of the proceeds will be contributed to the church.



FRIDAY EMAIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Would you like to receive our weekly announcements via email every Friday? Sign-up by visiting our Church website, www.springbranchpres.org.

sign up for our Mailing List

Church's Prayer Chain List?

The email prayer chain is open all who would like to pray for those individuals in need of prayer. If you would like to be included in the email prayer chain as a prayer warrior or if you have a prayer request for an individual, contact swdmmd@dikeman.net. It is requested that prayers be for your <a href="mailto:fami



Sebastian Hassett	12/3	Maurice Fayard II	12/14
Lin Sabala	12/3	Laurie Mitchell	12/14
Meredith Qualls	12/4	Adam Turner	12/14
Robert Bear	12/5	Bryan Evenson	12/15
Kay Nichols	12/5	Kristine Carpenter	12/18
Cameron Carpenter	12/9	Glenn Lanan	12/20
Jeremy Cross	12/11	Jonathan Craft	12/21
Christian Keller	12/11	Jerry Bigelow	12/26
Christopher Powell	12/11	Scott Lassiter	12/29
Kathryn Dethloff	12/12	Anna Farley	12/30
Sonya Bear	12/14		

Happy Anniversary!



Zach and Anna Farley	12/1
Joel and Rebeca Alegria	12/15
Chad and Kristine Carpenter	12/19

Church Calendar, Outside SBPC Reservations	ations					Dec 2024 (Central Time - Chicago)
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	F	Sat
	2	8	4	2	9	7
1st Sunday of Advent	6pm - PW Unwind	10am - Flexercise (GP)	10:15am - PW Board Meeting (CR)	10am - Flexercise (GP)	7pm - CENTI: Youth Program (YR)	9am - Cub Scout Service Project
8:30am - Blood Drive (GP)	6pm - Special Olympics: Volleyball	10:30am - Staff Meeting (P)	3:30pm - WOW (S)	1pm - Pastor Mark's Bible Study		3pm - Fairbees Christmas Party
9:15am - Nursery	7pm - Boy Scouts (Scout Hut)	6pm - Basketball (GP)	6pm - WNS	5pm - Messy Church (FH)		6pm - CENTI Church Service (GP)
9:30am - Packing Seafarers'		6:30pm - Cub Scouts: Tiger Cub	7pm - Handbell Choir (S)	6pm - Fairbees (GP)		
9:30am - Sunday School		7pm - CENTI Bible Study &				
9:45am - Choir Practice		7pm - Session (CR)		Series Programme		
10:50am - Worship						
8	6	10	=	12	13	14
2nd Sunday of Advent	5:30pm - Academy Board Meeting	10am - Flexercise (GP)	9:30am - PW Circle (CR & FH)	10am - Flexercise (GP)	6pm - SBM Arc Meeting (CR)	5:30pm - SBM Arc Christmas
9:15am - Nursery	6pm - Special Olympics: Volleyball	10:30am - Staff Meeting (P)	3:30pm - WOW (S)	1pm - Pastor Mark's Bible Study	7pm - CENTI: Youth Program (YR)	6pm - CENTI Church Service (GP)
9:30am - Chime Choir	7pm - Boy Scouts (Scout Hut)	6pm - Basketball (GP)	5pm - Girl Scouts (GP 1, 2, 3, 4)	6pm - Fairbees (GP)		
9:30am - Sunday School		6:30pm - Fellowship Meeting (CR)	5:30pm - Academy Christmas			
9:45am - Choir Practice		7pm - CENTI Bible Study &	6pm - WNS			
10:50am - Worship		7pm - Horizon's Bible Study on	7pm - Handbell Choir (S)			
12pm - Monthly Birthday						
2pm - Sunday Craft Workshop						
3pm - Cub Scouts: Bear (GP 1 & 2)						
15	91	17	18	19	20	21
3rd Sunday of Advent	10am - The Gathering Place (FH)	10am - Flexercise (GP)	Advent Party	10am - Flexercise (GP)	PresPress Articles DUE	8am - Presbyterian Men (CR)
9am - Young Adult Breakfast Club	6pm - Special Olympics: Volleyball	6pm - Basketball (GP)	3:30pm - WOW (S)	1pm - Pastor Mark's Bible Study	6pm - Young Adult Roller Skating	6pm - CENTI Church Service (GP)
		F	SIAM			
9:15am - Nursery	7pm - Boy Scouts (Scout Hut)	6:30pm - Cub Scouts: Tiger Cub	spm - wns	6pm - Fairbees (GP)	7pm - CENTI: Youth Program (YR)	
9:30am - Children's SS Class (GP	7pm - Mission Team Meeting	7pm - CENTI Bible Study &	7pm - Handbell Choir (S)			
9:30am - Sunday School		7pm - Faith Development Meeting	and the state of t			
9:45am - Choir Practice						
10:50am - Worship			V			
12:15pm - Cong. Care Mtg. (CR)			4			
5pm - BSA Committee Meeting						
6pm - Blue Christmas Service						
25	23	24	25	56	27	28
4th Sunday of Advent	6pm - Special Olympics: Volleyball	Academy Closes @ 2:30 PM	Christmas Day	Church & Academy Closed	6pm - SBM Arc Meeting (FH)	11am - Hot Meals
9:15am - Nursery	7pm - Boy Scouts (Scout Hut)	Christmas Eve	Church & Academy Closed		7pm - CENTI: Youth Program (YR)	6pm - CENTI Church Service (GP)
9:30am - Chime Choir		5:30pm - Refreshments	*			
9:30am - Sunday School		6pm - Christmas Eve Worship				
9:45am - Choir Practice						
10:50am - Worship		Christmas	Christmas			
59	30	31		2	e	4
9:15am - Nursery	6pm - Special Olympics: Volleyball	Academy Closes @ 2:30 PM				
9:30am - Sunday School	7pm - Boy Scouts (Scout Hut)	10am - Flexercise (GP)				
9:45am - Choir Practice		6pm - Basketball (GP)				
10:50am - Worship		7pm - CENTI Bible Study &				



Sponsored By:

Spring Branch Presbyterian Church 1215 Campbell Road Houston, Texas 77055 (713) 464-7659 www.springbranchpres.org





"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men! ~Luke 2:14