

Family breathes easier thanks to Gonzales church

December 17, 2015

GONZALES—Pastor Chris Irving and his family—particularly twin daughters Katie and Kylie—will breathe easier this Christmas, thanks to the generosity of First Baptist Church in Gonzales.



The Irving twins, Katelyn (left) and Kylie (right), should breathe easier in the future, since First Baptist Church in Gonzales replaced 20-year-old carpet in the parsonage with new vinyl flooring. (Photo courtesy of Chris Irving) About the time Irving arrived as pastor in Gonzales five and a half years ago, his wife, Amber, gave birth to the twins prematurely.

“There were no major respiratory problems that showed up when they were in the hospital” in the neonatal intensive care unit, Irving noted.

But a couple of weeks after the girls arrived home from the hospital, Katie suffered an attack of croup so severe her parents called emergency medical services.

“It scared us to death,” Irving admitted.

That event marked the beginning of a series of serious respiratory illnesses Katie and Kylie endured.

“We were having to do breathing treatments in the middle of the night,” Irving recalled.

About six months ago, Irving was riding home from a San Antonio Spurs game with a friend from church, talking about his girls and their health issues. His friend suggested perhaps the church should remove the carpet from the parsonage and install new flooring.

“I told him we had it cleaned a couple of times a year,” Irving said, noting the necessity of regular cleaning in a household that includes five children at home, plus a dog.



The Irving girls, Kylie, Karalyn and Katelyn, are grateful for new flooring at the First Baptist Church of Gonzales parsonage, particularly since the twins suffer from respiratory issues aggravated by the carpet that had been in the house. (Photo courtesy of Chris Irving) Irving recognized the congregation recently had made overdue repairs to the church-owned house it makes available to the music minister, as well as renovations to the church facility itself. He doubted the congregation could tackle the expense of another property-related project.

“I told him I didn’t know how we could do it, but I’d love to see it happen someday,” he said.

But his friend insisted it was past time for the 20-year-old carpet to be replaced with a new floor covering.

Three months later, the Upstairs Sunday School Class—a Bible study class composed mostly of couples with children and teenagers—launched Project Breathe Easy. Within about three weeks, the class—together with other

church members—raised the \$14,000 required to remove the old carpet from the parsonage and replace it with vinyl flooring.

Workers completed the installation in mid-December.

“We got our Christmas tree up the day the floor people put the big furniture back in place, even before we started unpacking boxes,” Irving said. “Now, we can have Christmas.”

This year, the Irving family hopes for an even merrier-than-usual Christmas, free from asthma-like symptoms, allergic reactions and respiratory illnesses.

“It’s been a long time, and we are so grateful for the new floor,” Irving said. “It’s beautiful. We look forward to having everyone (from the church) to come to see it soon.”