September 2020

Looking Upward, Growing Inward, and Serving



### C.S. Lewis on Living in Difficult Times

It is interesting to see the number of commentaries and articles one finds when one Googles "C.S Lewis + pandemic or isolation." There are quite a few that come up. One that I found most encouraging was published March 20 of this year by John G. West. This was fairly early; about the time most of us were just becoming aware that life was going to be very different for a while. In it he cites a portion from a sermon that C.S. Lewis gave in Oxford in 1939 that was later published as "Learning in War-Time." West says, "His advice seems eerily applicable to our own situation, just substitute "pandemic for "war":

"I think it important to try to see the present calamity in a true perspective. The war creates no absolutely new situation; it simply aggravates the permanent human situation so that we can no longer ignore it. Human life has always been lived on the edge of a precipice. Human culture has always had to exist under the shadow of something infinitely more important than itself. If men had postponed the search for knowledge and beauty until they were secure, the search would never have begun. We are mistaken when we compare war with "normal life." Life has never been normal. Even those periods which we think most tranquil, like the nineteenth century, turn out, on closer inspection, to be full of crises, alarms, difficulties, emergencies. Plausible reasons have never been lacking for putting off all merely cultural activities until some imminent danger has been averted or some crying injustice put right. But humanity long ago chose to neglect those plausible reasons. They wanted knowledge and beauty now, and would not wait for the suitable moment that never comes."

(C.S. Lewis, "Learning in War-Time," in The Weight of Glory)

West concludes:

"In coming days, you and your loved ones may struggle with fear and anxiety and worry. You may also find yourselves with more time on your hands than you know what to do with. Make the most of the opportunity.

Learn a new skill. Read good books. Watch inspiring films. Reconnect with your family by having discussions about things that matter.

Above all, remember the wise admonition of C.S. Lewis: "If men had postponed the search for knowledge and beauty until they were secure, the search would never have begun.""

I think this is sound advice. I pray that many of you are already following it in some manner. If you would like to read the article in its entirety, you can find it at <a href="https://evolutionnews.org/2020/03/living-amid-a-pandemic-wisdom-from-c-s-lewis/">https://evolutionnews.org/2020/03/living-amid-a-pandemic-wisdom-from-c-s-lewis/</a>

It has been difficult for all of us to stay connected and particularly stressful for those of us who were already facing challenges. Our Stephen Minister Team has continued to meet via Zoom. We have also prayed for and visited with our care receivers, usually by phone, but occasionally via socially distant in-person meetings. If you would like to learn more about Stephen Ministry, please contact Reverend Bill Willis at bill.00.willis@gmail.com. ~ Written by Tim Jenkinson

## Pines Family News & Current Events



Please keep Becki Nelson and family in your prayers in the loss of her husband Mike on August 6. Mike and Becki were members at Pines for many years before moving to Tucson.

### **WARNING!** Be Aware of Pretend Tracers

If you've been close to someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you may be contacted by a contact tracer. Legitimate contact tracers will never ask for your Medicare numbers or for financial information. If someone calls and asks for personal information, especially Medicare information, report it at 1-800-MEDICARE.



The Pines Benevolence account will receive a check this quarter from Randalls for \$115.63! Thank you for supporting Pines by registering your Randalls card to benefit Pines and its Missions!



Thank you so much to all who helped us celebrate our golden wedding anniversary, August 1. Whether via the Zoom party hosted by our daughter Susan and son-in-law Matt, a phone call, an email, or a mailed card or note, we felt your support and love for us on this special milestone in our life. We miss seeing our Pines family and look forward eagerly to the day when we can again gather to worship together.

LOOKING FOR A JOB?

### **ELECTION WORKERS WORKING AT THE POLLS**

### GO TO:

https://harrisvotes.com/PollWorkers?lang=en-US to learn more!

Requirements to work as a Election Worker In Texas, at a minimum, to be eligible for appointment as a election worker/clerk a person must be a U.S. citizen and a qualified voter of the territory of the election.

With our sincere thanks, Tim and Sharon Timmons

**REMINDER:** Please, if you move to a new address, change your phone number or your email address, please call or email the church office so that we can update our files. Also, if you feel you are not receiving communications from the church, **please** contact the church office! Thank you.

Please mark your calendars with

the NEWSLETTER DUE DATES:

September 18 (for October 2020 issue)

# Pastor's Page

Grace & Peace in the name of Christ,

I know I'm not telling you anything you don't know, but WOW, it has been a crazy year for the world. This virus has brought out the best in us, and in some cases, it has brought out the worst in us. The best would be how I have seen neighbor reaching out to neighbor by making runs to the grocery store and pharmacy. I've also seen the good in the way members of this congregation have shared the love of God with others by collecting, donating, and delivering food to Sherwood Elementary families in need. The love of God and others has been carefully stitched into over 1,200 masks made by our incredible crew of mask makers. These masks were shared with our mission partners for distribution to their clientele. The good continues with the personal notes and emails sent by loving members. I am thankful for the ongoing phone calls our Shepherds are making to their flock in an effort to stay connected. I think the separation from each other has been the toughest thing for most of us. We miss being in face to face relationship with each other. If you are similar to me, you have cried out to God praying for an end to this virus and the devastation it has caused God's people. You might have prayed for some sense of normalcy to return to your life, and for the suffering of stay at home orders, self-quarantine and physical distancing to end. As I thought about my cries to God, I thought about a scripture we read just a few weeks ago. The scripture came for Exodus chapter three. This is the chapter when Moses experiences the voice of God coming from the burning bush. You may remember from the reading that the Lord speaks to Moses and lets Moses know that He has, "... observed the misery of my people," and "...I have heard their cry." These scriptures reminded me that just as God knew the suffering of the Hebrew people, God knows our sufferings as well. Further in the scripture God reminds Moses, and I think us, that God, "... will be with you." God knows the incredible suffering we are enduring, each one of us is enduring, during this pandemic. God knows the pain we are feeling by being separated from our friends, loved ones and our family of faith. And because God knows your pain, God... the great I AM, promises to be with you.

God hears your cries and so does your Session regarding in-person worship. After careful review of the latest public health data and government guidelines, the Session has tentatively decided to safely regather for in-person worship on Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup> at 10:45AM. The final go ahead for re-gathering will be made at the Sessions September 28<sup>th</sup> meeting after reviewing the latest public health information.

The Session, as I'm sure you do as well, looks forward to re-gathering, but knows that for us to maintain gathering in person we will all need to follow strict guidelines to ensure a safe environment for everyone in attendance. More information about the guidelines will be communicated as we get closer to the re-gathering date. Rest assured we will continue to livestream our services on Facebook and at www.PinesPC.org for those who do not feel comfortable attending in person.

No matter your struggle, I encourage you to look to scripture and hear the constant voice of God saying, I know you're suffering, but do not fear, I am with you always. May each one of us take these promises to heart each and every day of our lives.

Your brother in Christ,

04

# Vision and Planning Update

Based upon feedback from earlier congregational surveys, and under the direction of Session, Vision and Planning has continued discussions for improvements to church communications. We have been working with our communications coordinator, Micah Myers to implement an on-line communications information gathering tool that will collect a) descriptions of events and gatherings, b) individuals or groups submitting the information, c) the types of communication requested (ex: newsletter, TWAP, banners, social media), and d) the timing of the communication. It is our hope that this will expand our audience for events and gatherings by letting committees and individuals know what communications tools are available, save time for recurring events by allowing us to retrieve prior requests and most importantly expand our means of providing updates on what is going on at Pines. The entry form is accessed through the Pines Website main page at the bottom under "have a new event, campaign or need publicity".

Regarding providing you with updates, letting you know what is going on at Pines and how you can participate is critical to our future. With that in mind V&P is wrapping up a Communications survey that will be distributed church wide. The survey will solicit feedback on the types of communication (This Week at Pines, Newsletter, Prayer List, Pastor Messages, Youth and Children's ministries updates) being received by each member. You will be asked for feedback on what you would like to receive but are not currently receiving, suggestions for improvements on communications, and a request for updated contact information for each family member. This is very important to our efforts to make improvements on what is going out to you and also to help us understand what is important to you and where to dedicate our resources. The survey should be distributed this month. Please take the time to respond.

#### **Pines Goals:**

We will be an active, inviting, valued neighbor that is engaged with the community. We will promote a family environment that builds relationships across generations.

We will deepen and nourish our spiritual lives so that we may nourish others and make disciples.

### Questions on this update? Contact any of our V&P Team Members:

Susan Babineck, Andy Gans, Kristin Davis-Owen, Jill Sherrill, Ann Smith, Chris Wolfe & John Work.





Pictures are from a Montrose Street Reach event in 2017.



Montrose Street Reach is a homeless ministry that Pines has had a "hands-on" relationship with. Several times a year, a dedicated team of Pines people provide and pass out the "pre worship service" snacks to about 150 homeless folks. Even though COVID-19 has prevented us from actually passing out the snacks of late, we still provide the snacks themselves as part of Pines' ministry and outreach. Visit their website: montrosestreetreach.com

Youth Happenings



Starting Sunday, September 13th, we kick off our new online program schedule for the Fall. We'll be hosting Sunday School on Zoom every Sunday at 9:30am for 6th - 12th graders. Then on Sunday evenings at 4pm, we'll have virtual Youth Group, where we'll fellowship, play games and have a lesson. Sunday School will remain virtual until all Sunday School classes regather at Pines, where it will shift to a hybrid option. Youth Group will remain virtual through the end of 2020. Looking forward to the great experiences we will have this school year! Thanks. Enjoy your days off! Jesse

### Children at Pines

### Families,

### Think activities are paused because of the pandemic? – Think again!

There are a slew of fun activities for you to engage in family faith formation at home! Make sure you are subscribed to Pastor Cindy's Weekly Kids Edition email. She includes fun lessons and activities along with links to storytime and the Children's Sermons. Did you catch the Bible Hero video series?

Are you watching Pastor Cindy on Facebook Live every Wednesday at 11:00 AM for Fun Family Fellowship? Don't forget to check out the updated Pines Kids website! No, it isn't the same as being together in-person, but we do miss you!

Pastor Cindy is available to Zoom or Facetime with you and your family – to provide individualized family spiritual development ideas. She also still has family take-home kits for you to learn more about God at your own pace! Curbside delivery is available!

We also miss hearing the youngest voices sing praise to our Creator! We would love to hear a recording of your child(ren) singing "Jesus Loves Me." What a great way for your child(ren) to be involved in worship from home!

As always, stay safe and healthy. Contact Pastor Cindy for any family needs.

Are you called to watch over the least of these? The nursery will need caregivers when in-person worship resumes! It's a beautiful way to see God in a new light while living out your call to bring the babes up in a life of faith. Contact Pastor Cindy.



## The Music Department

### **Greetings from the Music Department!**

This month I would like to look at one of our service responses, rather than giving you the history of a hymn.

One of the responses we sing after the Prayer of Confession and Silent Confession is "Cares Chorus." The song was written in 1978 by Kelly Willard who says, "Even with all that I have been through, nothing has changed my relationship with The Lord or the call that He placed on my life at a young age. If anything, I have gained more wisdom through the things (even mistakes) that I have suffered, and am more dependent on Him than ever before. I can testify of God's ultimate faithfulness to His children, and His unwavering commitment to conform us into the likeness of His dear Son, Jesus Christ."

The words of this song bring to mind the scripture Matthew 11:28-29 where Jesus says, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls."

Since I have been singing all the music for the services for the last five months, this little chorus has become very dear to me. Its simple tune, comforting words, and relaxed tempo always refresh my soul in each service. And when things come my way on a weekly basis that are difficult to deal with, I find myself singing these words:

I cast all my cares upon you. I lay all of my burdens down at your feet. And anytime that I don't know what to do, I will cast all my cares upon you.

Friends, during this time of isolation, worry, fearfulness, loneliness, and sometimes wondering if we can face another day, I urge you to "cast all your cares upon the Lord."

Bless you. Tim

MAM needs your help! The Resale Store and warehouse are <u>very</u> short on volunteers. Volunteers are urgently needed to sort and tag merchandise, stock shelves and racks, and assist with sales. The Resale Store was closed for many months, resulting in a serious loss of revenue to fund client programs. Now that we are open, we continue to see customers. As uncertain as these times are, many are having to cut costs and turn to MAM for their shopping needs. The store's continued viability is vital to MAM's ability to keep helping families in need. You can help!

We are asking each congregation to provide 4 to 6 volunteers for ONE THREE-HOUR SHIFT between now and the end of the year on these days and times:

- Thursdays, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.
- Saturdays, 9:00 a.m. to noon
- Saturdays, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

MAM is following all safety protocols – masks and sanitizer are provided, social distancing is practiced, and the number of shoppers allowed in the store is controlled to avoid crowding. Volunteers may request to limit their service to areas not frequented by the public.

A signup link and calendar is provided here: <a href="https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080B45A4A92EA7F85-fall1">https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080B45A4A92EA7F85-fall1</a>
Gather a few friends, pick your date and volunteer! If every member congregation can staff just one of these shifts, that will fill almost 2/3 of the available shifts through the end of the year!

If you have any questions, email Stephanie Tippitt at <a href="mailto:stippitt@mamhouston.org">stippitt@mamhouston.org</a>, or call my cell anytime. Thank you for all that you do for our community!

Blessings, Bill William W. (Bill) Ogden, *Community Liaison* Memorial Assistance Ministries 1625 Blalock Road, Houston, TX 77080

Phone: (713) 468-4516 ext. 161 | Cell: (713) 826-9440 | www.mamhouston.org



### **Missions**



Cindy Coles delivered 130 masks to Coalition for the Homeless. Cindy made 50 adult and 80 child/youth. Homelessness affects families with children not just single adults! These will help families in shelters working through the re-homing process.

Thank you Cindy for taking care of these families!



### TACO AND A PRAYER

Is it **TACO** time again? We sure hope so, but we need your help. The Taco and a Prayer Team is getting back together to reach out, once again, to our neighbors with a warm taco, a cold drink, and a heartfelt prayer. BUT WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS! If you're able to cook some sausage at your home, assemble tacos early on a Friday morning, or help deliver tacos, drinks and prayers, please contact Margaret Schafer at <a href="mailto:ga.schafers@comcast.net">ga.schafers@comcast.net</a>. We need to know if you can help to ensure adequate hands to make this work. We hope to resume TAAP on September 11, so please respond ASAP.

### **BACK TO SCHOOL OFFERING**

A HEARTFELT thanks to all donated to the Back to School Offering benefiting Memorial Assistance Ministries, Sherwood Elementary and The Mission of Yahweh. Your generous donations helped many children with back to school needs in this unprecedented return to school.



### AGAPE OFFERING

It's BAAAAACK! Pack-The-Portico MEGA Event! In response to the increasing need for food assistance in the Sherwood community, the Pines AGAPE Offering for September will be a **MEGA Event to Pack-The-Portico**. **Every Saturday in September** from 11:00am-1:00 pm, you can drop your food items off at the front portico. We hope to fill 50 bags bi-weekly for the next 2 months with non-perishable food items. Below is a list of what we need: **Peanut Butter, Jelly (plastic container), Spaghetti Sauce** 

(plastic or canned) Pasta Noodles, Pinto Beans, Rice, Cereal Boxes, Macaroni & Cheese, Ravioli, Vienna Sausage, Soups, Fruit Cups and Apple Sauce.

If you are unable to deliver your donated items, please call the church office and we will arrange a pick-up. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

### Missions continued...

### **Committee UPDATE**

Greetings Pines family! While most of us have been confined to our homes during this COVID-19 virus, your Missions Committee has been hard at work reaching out to our neighbors in need. Here is an update:

SHERWOOD Elementary: Margaret and Kari have been in contact with the leadership at Sherwood regarding Pines' ongoing support of that community. Sadly, our volunteers are not allowed to be on the property, therefore, our usual SHERWOOD WORKDAY and SHERWOOD MENTORING are canceled. The Missions Committee is currently working on an alternative plan for the Sherwood Christmas Store. Details will be shared in early October. From April to June, the Missions Committee delivered over 430 bags of food! However there is an ongoing and urgent need for food. With this in mind our September AGAPE OFFERING will be a food drive for the Sherwood families in need. For further details, please see the AGAPE OFFERING for Pack-the-Portico MEGA Event in this newsletter.

The Pines Mask-Makers are still hard at working making masks for at-risk children at both Sherwood and Meadowood Elementary schools. To date, the mask-makers have made over 1,500 masks for distribution to several of Pines' Mission Partners. Our heartfelt thanks go out to Linda Aldred, Margaret Schafer, Robin Brady, Bethel Strawser, Cindy Sproul, Elizabeth Deraps, Janice Pannell, Melissa Sandstrom, Kelly and Casey Aldred, Lesa Smith, Cindy Coles, Judy Shamp, Becky Kusko, Connie Sipp, Liz Buelow, Roger and Jerry Mowell, Marcia Welsh and Shirley Bollich for their sewing and creative efforts. We also thank those who have contributed materials, Sharon Timmons, Barbara Youngflesh, Janan Plush, Linda Johnson, Kelly Aldred, Cindy Coles, Bethel Strawser, Margaret Schafer, Linda Aldred, Judy Shamp and Lesa Smith. This has truly been a labor of love, and the Pines family has come through in a big way!

**TRT Hosts**: The Restoration Team, one of Pines' mission partners, has requested meal assistance for a new volunteer team they will host through the end of September. Pines will provide at least one meal for the group of 9 young adult volunteers. The date has yet to be set, so if you are interested in helping, please let Margaret Schafer know, or call the church office. If we have enough volunteers to provide more than one meal, that would be awesome!

If the church staff can help you in any way, please call the office. Even though we are not gathering in our normal way for Worship at the moment, we are still at work in the office and here for you!



Pines now has an Instagram account. Please click on the link below to access this account.

instagram.com/pineshouston

#### The Berkley Tree

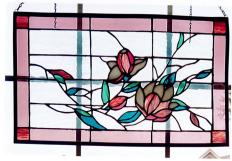
A most intriguing long, triangular shaped package arrived in my mail. It turned out to be a living tribute given in loving memory of Berkley Egenes, a HAPS member whose courageous life was lived for 20 years with Parkinson's disease.

My beloved husband, Harry, after about 12 courageous years of life with Parkinson's disease had been called home on July 5, 2020. Thankfully, he would not suffer any longer so it was a blessing for him, though extremely sad for me and the rest of our family to say goodbye for now.

Inside the beautifully wrapped and protected package I found a tree to be planted in his memory as a living tribute to another who had Parkinson's disease. This was not just any tree, but the perfect one for Harry and for me. It was a tulip poplar, marked only by a tiny piece of paper inside all the wrapping.

Not knowing what a tulip poplar looked like, I checked the computer and up came gorgeous pictures of a pink and white flowering tree, just like one we had enjoyed in our backyard for about 50 years in Houston. I called it a flowering magnolia (one of its other names) but it was exactly like the tree we had loved as our special tree. It was the first to bloom in the Spring, at about Valentine's Day every February.





It was so lovely, we, with our son, David, took several photos to get a perfect one to enlarge as a picture for our home. Later, I made a stained glass panel, also large, for our window. We moved to a retirement place, and the photo and stained glass are still in our home.

The tree will be enjoyed by many at Pines Presbyterian Church, where we have been members for about 48 years. Harry will be inurned in the columbarium there near to the tree.

As you see, this is the most touching, precious gift we could have received. Thanks, be to God for letting us be part of his plan celebrating Harry as well as Berkley Egenes.

Eleanor Loose



**Staying Connected:** --- You can now find upcoming opportunities to connect by visiting our website: <u>pinespc.org</u>. Join in on the next scheduled meeting, class or event by signing up for your free Zoom account: <u>zoom.us/signup</u>. View our archived videos anytime and also join in "live"!



**Live Worship Services:** --- Pines Worship Services on Sundays are now live streaming! 10:45 am worship services can be viewed by visiting our website: <u>pinespc.org</u> You can also catch us on facebook for the same live streaming worship services.



**Online Giving:** ---As always, we thank you for your generous sharing of treasures in the spirit and practice of stewardship. Please visit our website for online giving: pinespc.org



Lou and Sue have been working on puzzles during COVID. What have you been doing? Send your projects to the church. We would LOVE to see what you have been doing!





### Remember...

When in doubt and you need an answer to a city or county question, dial **211**.

This is a free service that will direct you where you need to go.







"Children's Masks GALORE! Cindy Coles and Margaret Schafer delivered 120 masks to Bonnie Reyes at Sherwood Elementary School today. The Pines mask-makers, Cindy Coles, Cindy Sproul, Linda Aldred, Robin Brady, Elizabeth Deraps, Janice Pannell, Kelly Aldred, Lesa Smith and Margaret Schafer have been hard at work to create child-sized masks for kids in need at Sherwood, just in time for school to begin. Bonnie expressed her appreciation for the loving donation and sent her thanks to Pines for all the support."

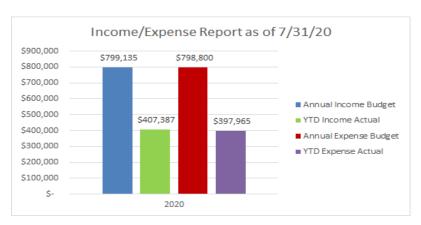
# Stewardship

#### STEWARDSHIP UPDATE:

- 1. Pledge income is slightly below target for 7 months operations, which is not uncommon during summer months. At the end of first seven months the year, 53% of pledge income is received. Non-pledge in come is well below budget with only 30% of non-pledge income received at the end of the first 7 months. Total Income is beginning to fall below target.
- 2. Overall, committee expenses are below budget expectations due to reduced activity. Mission expenditures reflect payment of 50% benevolence payments in May.
- 3. YTD Total Income is \$407,387; YTD total expenses are \$397,965; with Net Income thru July at \$9,422.
- 4. The balance sheet reflects the receipt of PPP loan funds (\$58, 925) in April under current liabilities. It is anticipated that all of this loan will be forgiven. This will help to offset unrealized non-pledge income.
- 5. Following members' receipt of pledge status letters in July, we received notice of the need to revise pledge expectations downward by 10% for the remainder of this year. It is hoped that this income reduction will be offset by reduced expenditures for the year. The Session continues to monitor expenses closely.
- 6. Maintaining our pledge income makes it possible for Pines to continue to live into our mission. Thank you to all who give generously!
- 7. It is now possible to manage your giving to Pines in two new ways: text-to-give (713) 597-5605. First-time text donors will receive a message with a link to enter payment information. Subsequent text giving can then be done by just entering an amount, or an amount followed by purpose of the gift, i.e. \$50 missions, or \$100 pledge.

You can also use the following UPC code which will connect you directly to the Donate page on the Pines website.





# **Session Meeting Notes**

The Session met for its regular Stated meeting on August 16, 2020. Here are some highlights.

- Reviewed the current public health situation in the Houston area.
- Targeted World Communion Sunday (October 4) for the resumption of in-person worship to accompany continued live-streaming. The decision is pending final approval at the September Stated meeting.
- Approved the staggered re-opening of Pines Preschool beginning September 8.
- Discussed current planning for Christian education activities in the fall.
- Approved resumption of Taco and a Prayer on September 11.

# Service Beyond The Walls

How are you active and serving in God's Kingdom? Send your thoughts to cindy@pinespc.org.





What have you been doing during COVID? Some of us exercised, some were able to go to work, some painted, some traveled, some binge-watched movies (yes, just call me guilty)....and the list goes on. Toshi knitted. She knitted for the Women's Home, she knitted for the Sherwood families, she knitted for the Mission of Yahweh, she knitted for new babies, she knitted for friends and family. She never stopped. Honestly, I have never seen so much knitting in one place at one time! It was amazing to see what all she has done during this time. Toshi has always had the desire to serve others, and she has done that time and time again. I am so very grateful for Toshi, her gifts and for all our friends at Pines that give of their time and energy to use the gifts God has given them to serve others and our church. I thank God every day that he blessed me by leading me to Pines. Thank you to everyone for all that you do for Pines and our community! Blessings, Cindy H.

Ms. Lily Comes Home

Ms. Lilly is a 78-year-old woman whose THERESTORATION TEAM home took in three feet of water during Hurricane Harvey. The home was never mucked out following the flood and for eighteen months, Ms. Lilly continued to live here before Adult Protective Services deemed the home uninhabitable.

Because of our incredible volunteers and supporters, The Restoration Team was able to muck out the home and remediate the mold, stabilize the foundation, replace the roof, repair the siding, build a wheelchair ramp, upgrade the plumbing and electric, and install all new insulation, drywall,



flooring, and cabinets.

128 volunteers from all over the country poured 2,637 hours of love and labor into Ms. Lilly's home. Thank you to everyone who supported us through this incredible project, you have truly made a difference for Ms. Lilly and families all over!





(Pines volunteers helped with Ms. Lily's home.)

Pines address: 12751 Kimberley Lane, Houston Texas 77024. Our phone number is: 713-467-2234.