

ECHOES

April 2010

Mission Statement

As brothers and sisters in Christ, we are called to **invite** people to know Christ, to **build** a community of faith, and to **serve** all in love to the glory of God!
Adopted Easter, 1995

**Palm Valley Lutheran Church
A Stephen Ministry Church**
2500 East Palm Valley Boulevard
Round Rock, Texas 78665
Phone: 512-255-3322 Fax: 512-388-2389
www.palmvalleylutheranchurch.org

Rev. Dr. David P. Koppel, Senior Pastor
Rev. Joaquin Figueroa, Hispanic Ministry
Rev. David Tietz, Visitation Minister
Mollie DeVries, Executive Administrator
Les Williams, Director of Youth and Education



*Notes From
Pastor Dave*

Dear Friends,

The winter has quickly gone by, and now it is Spring. Lent is nearly over. Soon it will be Easter.

It's getting a little warmer. The flowers are out. It's a natural progression. The seasons change. One follows another. It's the normal way things are.

Easter is not normal. It is not a natural progression. The body that was dead has been raised to life! There isn't something remotely normal and natural about that!

Easter isn't just one more sign of Springtime. Easter is a miracle! It is a One-of-a-kind, mind-blowing, change-your-life-forever kind of an event! Everything is different because of Easter!

As long as we look at it as a normal, routine, once-a-year event, nothing in our lives will change. But when we see it for what it is, if we are honest, and if we believe what we say we believe, then all of life must change.

Pardon the pun, but if Easter is real, we MUST put all our eggs in one basket! Nothing is as important as spreading the Good News that God is alive and well, and that He loves you! The patterns, the priorities, everything must shift. We can't go on pretending that it's business as usual.

Since Christ is raised from the dead, we have no option other than to live in thanksgiving, to praise Him, to worship God, and to shift all our priorities to the eternal, rather than the here and now. We live, we share, we give, we tell the story. It may not make sense to the rest of the world.... but neither did the empty tomb!

May your life be filled with Easter joy!

In His Grip,

Pastor

Pastor





Operating Budget:

Jan– Feb 2010 Income	\$139,838	(91.14% Projected Income)
Jan– Feb 2010 Expense	\$123,773	(90.02% Projected Expense)
Net income over expense	\$ 16,065	

Off the top or from what is left?

Our Lord asks of us to give unto Caesar (better known today as - the IRS) what belongs to Caesar and unto God what is his. He asks that we return to the Lord from the “**first fruits**” of His goodness to us.

We receive so much and we can show our gratitude by returning a portion to God “**off the top**”. Not from the change left over after we have paid the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker (or in today’s terminology – the cable TV, electric bill, mortgage, soccer fees - after we have done all we wish with our income).

This certainly requires faith that God will be true to his promise to reward the generous giver. It is amazing how God’s math works – he can do more with 90% after your giving to him the tithe than we can accomplish with 100% of income if we don’t tithe. I would encourage you to try it, and experience his math.

Our secretary, Vicky Haley and her husband Jim have decided to move back to Florida where they have lived and have many friends. Vicky will be greatly missed by our members and staff alike. She has been a joy to work with for these past two years.

This job posting generated 227 applicants, which have been reviewed, 19 having been interviewed, and have now narrowed the field to three applicants. Our plan is to have our new secretary working with Vicky during Holy Week to learn as much as she can. We hope that you will stop in to welcome this individual, but **not** during Holy Week due to the work load that week, but the weeks following.

If you find yourself sitting in the pew and find you have left your check book at home – again, would you find it helpful to have your offerings debited directly from your bank account as you probably do with other financial obligations? Remember that Palm Valley offers electronic giving for those of you who wish to have your contributions transferred electronically to the church’s account.

If you travel, this is particularly helpful in keeping up with your intended offerings. One simple, easy to use authorization from our website can make that happen. Please check out the website and follow the “ACH “ options. If you “*don’t do computers*” as some do not, please feel free to contact me for assistance.

A big “**THANK YOU**” to those who worked here on our “work day” this month, when weeds were pulled, mulch was added, and new flowering plants planted. Beautiful color now abounds in the beds as a result of the hard work of a few people. Green is popping out all over so spring must be here after a long hard winter.

We hope you have noticed the cemetery entrance recently, as we were finally able to get the finishing touches done to the archway, with gold lettering to really make the words “pop” making them much more easily read. We have had many positive comments on the overall effect it has had. We hope you like it also.

Do you have a high school senior in your home? We will be mailing out application forms in the next couple of weeks to all seniors that they may apply for one of our \$500 “Senior Scholarships” offered by our Endowment Fund here at Palm Valley. Watch for your senior’s letter and encourage them to apply for these funds. That \$500 will certainly help toward that college tuition this fall.

The hired “skunk hunter” did manage to catch one very large skunk and haul it away as far as Taylor. Hopefully his “homing” senses are not too great.

If you visit the Christian Life Center during Holy Week you will notice that we have had the floors refinished as we traditionally do one time a year. It was stripped, cleaned, resealed, resurfaced, and burnished to an almost new look. In a year’s time it gets so much traffic, it really needs its face lift each year at this time.

May God bless your life this day and the days ahead!

En Agape,

Mollie

Mollie DeVries, F.C.B.A.
Executive Administrator

Church Council

Due to the change of the council schedule the March summary will appear in the May Echoes.

ELCA Update

As of March 4, 2010, 276 congregations nationwide had first votes (this is a two-vote process) to leave the ELCA. 197 of those first votes passed, and 79 failed. Of the 197 congregations, 62 have had second votes. (So a total of 62 congregations (0.05%) have officially voted to leave the ELCA). The ELCA has roughly 10,500 congregations. If all 197 congregations leave, that will represent 1.8 percent of the whole. In Texas, of the three synods, only our synod has had any congregations take a vote to leave. In our synod, 12 congregations had a first vote, and 10 passed. Of those ten, four have had second votes and are leaving. (Those four are St. Paul, New Braunfels; First, Orange Grove, St. Andrew, Weesatche; and St. John, Boerne.) On a related note, in a news release dated March 15, 2010, the synod council of the Florida-Bahamas Synod denied a congregation's request to leave the ELCA.

As expected, funding in the ELCA is declining due to the economy and due to some congregations withholding support. Mission support for 2009-2010 is down by \$5.6 million, World Hunger is down by \$1.9 million.

Flag Burning

Do you have a worn and tattered American flag that you would like to appropriately dispose of? The VFW will be sponsoring a "flag burning ceremony" here at PVLC on April 10th at 10 am. This ceremony will occur in the open area near the oak grove behind the church. In addition to the involvement of the Round Rock VFW post, several scout troops, other VFW posts, as well as a group of young Marines will participate in this ceremony. Feel free to come and be a part of this community event here at Palm Valley.

***** Next Echoes Deadline ***
Friday April 20, 2010**

Holy Week Calendar

Palm Sunday is **March 28**. Children and adults are welcome to join in the Procession of Palms beginning outside as the service begins.

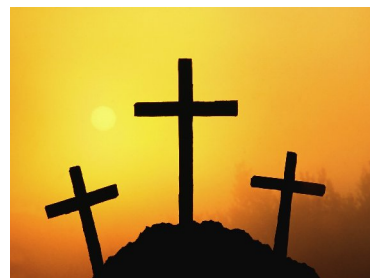
Maundy Thursday is **April 1** with services at 12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m. We will offer Holy Communion commemorating the night when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and gave His disciples a new commandment. (No meal)

Good Friday is **April 2** with services at **12:00 noon** (no meal) and **7:00 p.m.** (Meal at 6:00 p.m. only).

Easter Sunday on **April 4** begins with an outdoor **Sunrise Service** with Holy Communion beginning at **6:28 a.m.** This will take place near the cemetery, weather permitting. In case of rain or cold, we will move the service into the sanctuary. **Breakfast** tacos will be served by the youth in the **Parish Hall from 7:30 a.m.—10:00 a.m.**

Festive **Easter** worship services with **Holy Communion** will be celebrated at **8:00, 9:00 and 11:15 a.m.** Worship in Spanish at **9:30**.

Remember to **bring a flower** to place on the cross before each worship service. All adults and children are invited to participate.



Good Friday Cantata

The Adult Choir will present *Harvest of Sorrows*, a cantata on the Passion of our Lord, on Good Friday, April 2, 2010 at 7:00 P.M. Come and hear the story portrayed in music and narration.

Preschool News

It's April which means it's SPRING! We'll be learning about all sorts of fun and interesting things this month at preschool - Easter, dinosaurs, animals, plants, flowers and even insects!

On Saturday, April 3rd the preschool is sponsoring our annual Community Easter Egg Hunt. The Egg Hunt will take place at 10:00am in the Oak Grove and is geared for children ages 1 - 8. This event will take place rain or shine (we'll move the egg hunt inside if it rains)!

Registration for the upcoming 2010 - 2011 school year is going on now. Please tell any friends and neighbors, especially those new to the area, about our program! For more information please visit our website at www.palmvalleypreschool.org. We can always be reached at abc123@palmvalleypreschool.org or at (512)388-5054.

Sunday School Social

Sunday April 11th – join us in the Grove for a BYOL (Bring your own lunch) luncheon for food and fellowship right after Sunday School. Bring your lunch, pick up a burger or chicken and come have lunch, visit and let the kids play. Simply a time for fellowship. If weather is a factor, we will meet in the CLC. We will have a monthly social on the 2nd Sunday of each month, so mark your calendar. Everyone is invited! See you there!

VBS

The VBS leadership team is currently forming and we would love to have you join us! We have filled most of the leadership positions but are seeking coordinators for the following areas: Drama, Costumes, Decorations, Registration & Welcome, First Aid and Photographer. If you would be interested in finding out more about what these leadership roles would entail and want to help plan this exciting adventure to Egypt, please contact VBS Co-Chairs, Cheree Peterson or Pam Dieterich. VBS will be held the first week of August 2010 in the mornings.

Women's News

April Calendar

Tuesday, weekly, 1:00 p.m.	Afternoon Quilters
Wednesday, Apr 14, 12:00 p.m.	Noon Prayer Group
Thursday, Apr 15, 6:30 p.m.	Rebecca Circle
Friday Apr 16, 6:30 p.m.	Adults' Night Out
Saturday, Apr 17, 4:00 p.m.	Circulo de Mujeres Marta
Monday, Apr 19, 6:15 p.m.	Sing-Along @ TCC
Tuesday, Apr 20, 10:00 a.m.	Esther Circle
Thursday, Apr 22, 3:00 p.m.	Cluster
Monday, Apr 26, 6:30 p.m.	Sassy Seniors

PVLCP Easter Egg Hunt

All preschool, church and community children ages 1-8 are invited to attend the annual Easter Egg Hunt held on Saturday, April 3rd at 10:00 AM in the playground/Oak Grove area. (In case of bad weather, it will be moved inside to the CLC). PVLCP will be collecting stickers, small trinkets, and individually wrapped candy for this event. We need candy that won't melt, does not pose a choking hazard and will fit inside of a small plastic egg. Please place your donations in the labeled boxes located in the church office or outside of the preschool office before Tuesday, March 30th. Thank you for your donations!

At the hunt, children will be separated into different age groups for their chance to find treat-filled eggs. Be sure to take the treats out of the eggs and return the empty eggs to the main table – we recycle them. Remember the children need to find the eggs. Parents may only help the one and two-year olds. See you at the Easter Egg Hunt!

Thrivent Night at Dell Diamond

Please keep June 21 open to be with us at Dell Diamond. Thrivent at Dell Diamond Day at 7 p.m. Ticket prices will be reduced for Thrivent members. Non alcohol drinks and food will be reduced. Details not yet firm. Please keep the date open to be with us.

Chapter leaders and representatives of Thrivent Insurance for Lutherans



“Where there is no vision, the people perish” Prov.29:18 (KJV.)

HISPANIC

By Pastor Figueroa

Ministry

This the second part of my report presented to the Church Council retreat in New Braunfels.

““In order to fulfill these goals, (described in my last Echoes) this is the action plan for the 2010 (*words in Italics are for something new in 2010*)

- 1) Praise (worship): In order to provide the community with opportunities to praise God in Spanish we plan to
 - A) Keep offering Services in Spanish at 9.30 using the “Liturgia y Canto” (ELCA book of worship)
 - B) Sermons for children in charge of Elba Figueroa
 - C) Latino oriented music played by Dale and Becky Clowers. We will also keep serving Communion the first Sunday of the month.
- 2) In order to help church members to grow in faith and spiritual commitment (discipleship) we plan to have
 - A) 2 Spiritual Retreats (men and women) one on February 27 and *another on October 23,*
 - B) 2 retreats only for women one on April 17 and the *other one on August 21, and one retreat only for men on June 26.*
- 3) In order to help Church members to become disciples we have created the “School for Disciples” which meets on Wednesdays at 7 PM. Last year we studied Rick Warren’s book *The Purpose Driven Life* and plan to start the study of several Max Lucado’s books.
- 4) Teach (Christian Education.) In order to grow in God’s biblical understanding we plan
 - A) To keep offering Bible classes Tuesday in Austin at 7PM
 - B) Keep offering 2 simultaneous classes on Wednesdays 7 PM: one led by Elba Figueroa (Bible 1) and the School for Disciples (Bible 2) by Pastor Figueroa (see number 3 above)
 - C) Sunday school for all ages. On Sunday after the children’s sermon some kids are led to Sunday school in English.
 - D) *We are exploring the possibility to open a new Bible class in Pflugerville.*
- 5) Evangelism (Outreach) In order to invite the community to come to Church on Sunday and grow numerically we plan
 - A) *To send 200 letters to neighbors in RR every two months (we already have a mailing list of 3500 addresses)*
 - B) *Once a month to hand out flyers in Round Rock inviting neighbors to come to Church (we did this for 6 Saturdays last year).*
 - C) *Organize four evangelistic especial Services to celebrate Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and Central America and Mexico Independence’s Day in September*
 - D) *5 Posadas (reenactment of Joseph and Mary looking for a place to stay) in neighborhood homes in December to celebrate Christmas. To publicize*

these events we will use flyers but we would like to use also, radio, TV, community newspapers etc. Vital part of this evangelistic effort is also the need of a permanent and visible sign so people driving on 79 know that there is Worship in Spanish at PV.

- 6) Share (fellowship). In order to have fellowship with our Anglo brothers and sisters we plan,
 - A) Keep writing an article for Echoes
 - B) *Once a month help Pr. Dave leading worships at 8 and 11.15*
 - C) Being part of the Church annual Fair
 - D) Participate in the annual women retreat
 - E) *Our goal is to have a Hispanic person as Church Council member by next year.*
- 7) In order to share our faith with the surrounding community we plan
 - A) *To attend once a month the Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Human Rights meetings*
 - B) *Help Casa Marianella in Austin which provides shelter, clothing and food for immigrant and other services to that community.*
 - C) *Attend the Association of Round Rock Pastors monthly meetings and*
 - D) *Attend meetings with other Lutheran Pastors doing Hispanic Ministry in Austin and/or Round Rock. Along with Pastors Krebs (Prince of Peace) and Anderson (San Juan/St. John) of Austin we are planning a multicultural service on April 18.*
 - E) *Attend the annual Retreat for Lutheran Latino Pastors sponsored by our Synod Office.*
- 8) Witness (mission). In order to witness our Christian faith in foreign lands I plan
 - A) *Continue being part of the PV Mission trip to El Salvador (July 11-17)*
 - B) *Keep running to raise funds to send El Salvador children to school.*

To fulfill this plan we need, beside your prayers:

- A) *A visible sign at the Church main entrance on Highway 79 announcing our worship time in Spanish*
- B) *make greater use of Spanish in the church language (for example:, translating into Spanish Pr. Dave weekly letters, make surveys/letters available in Spanish etc.)*
- C) *Easy access to Hispanic Ministry information in the Church website*
- D) *Include Spanish in the Church website, (current Hispanic Ministry information is in English,)*
- E) *Include Spanish in the Church brochure (Hispanic Ministry information is in English,*
- F) *financial resources to fund the use of means of communication such electronic media, radio and/or TV, newspapers, flyers, cards, mailing letters to advertise Church services and activities,*
- G) *A Senior/Hispanic Pastor discretionary special fund to respond to Latino individual crisis.*

As you can see this is an ambitious agenda that demands extensive expenditure of personal effort which is beyond the minimum 20 hours a week which was initially planned but I do it because I really love this ministry knowing that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13. Amen



Social Ministry

Compassion Sunday

On Sunday, April 18, Palm Valley will be hosting their second annual Compassion Sunday. This event will be happening all over the United States with the goal of releasing children from poverty in Jesus name. Compassion Sunday is a one day event that is encouraged by Compassion International. Compassion International or CI is a US based non-profit agency that focuses their attention on the poorest children in 25 different countries.

CI feels that there are four areas of life that must be met for poverty to be broken. The first is spiritual. CI is unashamedly a Christian organization that believes the first step to breaking poverty is having hope, and this hope is not in food but in Jesus. Another area is socially. Children need to be surrounded by other children and have the right to act like children and not have to go work the field or be sold into prostitution. CI helps children develop the social skills needed as they grow into adolescence and adulthood. Another area is economically. If a child does not have the necessary skills to get a job then poverty is not broken. CI helps teach children how to do different jobs so that they can earn an honest living and support a family. The last is physically. Children who are apart of CI will get annual doctor and dentist check ups. They also will be given any addition vitamins and medicine that are necessary to be a healthy, thriving and growing child. Seminars are held for parents to help educate them on the necessary foods they should be feeding their children as well.

All of the things mentioned above can not happen without your support. Each child in CI is either sponsored or waiting for a sponsor. To sponsor a child it only cost \$38 a month. That is pretty cheap when you think about all that it accomplishes. Also, as a sponsor you will receive letters from your child three times a year and you can write back to them as well. In the letters the children will ask you to pray for them, tell you about their best friends, and share with you many things that make you glad you choice to sponsor a child.

On April 18th you will have the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty in a child's life. Please pray about sponsoring child and then come to church that day and pick out the child who is waiting for a sponsor.

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

From: Vicky Haley—Words cannot express my deep appreciation for the wonderful way that all of you have helped me in so many ways during my time here at Palm Valley! The community that you have is special, treasure it! It was not an easy decision to leave, I will always remember my 2 years here with great fondness! God Bless you as you continue to be a beacon for Jesus in this area!

From: Helen Blackman—Thank you to everyone who prayed for me, sent cards, called and visited during my hospital stay. A special thank you to Pastor Koppel and Pastor Tietz for their visits!

From: Beverly Blasé, Yvonne White and family—We wish to thank our church family for all the cards, prayers, visits, meals phone calls, and hugs during our father Milton Wieding's illness and passing. Your support meant so much to us! We especially would like to thank Pastor Koppel for his visits, and guidance during this trying time. God's love shines through each of you.

From: Bill and Beverly Blasé— Thank you to all who have been praying, visiting, calling and just plain caring during the past couple of months. Your love and support has helped us through a rough time and has reminded us what a blessing you all are as friends and family in Christ. God's blessings to you all.

Special Thanks to these Helpers with the March Echoes

Johnnie Pecht	Marion Fowler
Pat Wolff	Herb Wolff
Sarah Williams	Jean Kammer
Delpha Berg	Sheila Smith

All Committee Night, 7:00 p.m.
Monday May 3— Parish Hall

Church Council 12:45 p.m.
Sunday April 25— Conference Room



**End poverty by sponsoring
a child on April 18!**

April Youth Calendar

Every Sunday	Adult/Sr. High Volleyball	4:00–6:00 pm
April 7	Youth Bible Study	6:00–8:00 pm
April 7	JAM	6:00–7:15 pm
April 14	Youth Bible Study	6:00–8:00 pm
April 14	JAM	6:00–7:15 pm
April 21	Youth Bible Study	6:00–8:00 pm
April 21	JAM	6:00–7:15 pm
April 28	Youth Bible Study	6:00–8:00 pm
April 28	JAM	6:00–7:15 pm

Camping Trip

On April 30-May 2 the youth will be going on their 3rd Annual Camping Trip. We will be going to Wilson Fox Park in Granger. This weekend has been a blast the last couple years and it is sure to be a blast again this year. The cost to attend this event is \$20 which covers camp sites, meals on Saturday and breakfast on Sunday as well as snacks throughout the weekend. To sign up for this grab a form off the youth bulletin board, fill it out, and turn it into Les Williams with your money.

Lock-In

On April 2, which is Good Friday, the youth are having a lock-in at the church. The cost to attend this event is \$5 and you can register any time before then or the day of the lock-in. Throughout the night there will be video games, movies, group games, Palm Valley Survivor, Bible studies and a concert by a local hip hop artist name Myrage. Any youth in 6th-12th grade is not going to want to miss this event.

43,000 Meals

On Saturday March 13 a group of students from PVLC helped participate in an event to feed orphans. An organization called Feed My Starving Children challenged the youth groups in the Austin and surrounding areas to pack 100,000 meals in seven hours. During the two hour time that PVLC packed meals we were able to pack 43,000! That is incredible. The process for packing the meals was putting all the food in the bag, weighing it, sealing the bag, and then putting the bags in the box. The next person to touch the meals will be orphans. It was great being part of feeding the orphans.

Letter from Les

On our Wednesday night Bible study we recently studied the book of Jonah. Everyone is somewhat familiar with this book. God tells Jonah to go preach to the Ninevites. Jonah says no and jumps on a boat going the opposite direction. God then sends a storm on the boat, Jonah gets thrown overboard and is swallowed by a big fish. But, there is more to Jonah. He eventually repents and then goes to Nineveh and preaches. The Ninevites repent and God decides not to kill them.

When teaching this book, it is what comes next in this story that spoke the most to me. In chapter 4 Jonah is “displeased” and “angry” that God did not kill all the Ninevites because they repented. He even tells God, “O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still in my country? That is why I made hast to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.” Jonah reveals something about himself in this statement to God: he has discrimination in his heart. Jonah did like the Ninevites therefore he did not want to preach repentance to them. He wanted God to kill them. In chapter 1 Jonah experience God’s grace, mercy, love and slowness to anger. Now in chapter 4 he doesn’t want to show it to the Gentile Ninevites.

Discrimination on any level is not good. What is in your heart? How do you feel about Muslims? How do you feel about people who have wronged you? How do you feel about Obama? If your attitude toward them is not grace, mercy and love then there is some discrimination in your heart that you need to get rid of...and we all have some type of discrimination we must deal with. Next in the story Jonah goes and sits outside of the city to see if God just might change his mind and kill the Ninevites anyway. While waiting God causes a plant with huge leaves to grow up and shield Jonah from the sun. Then during the night God causes a worm to come upon the plant and destroy the plant. When Jonah wakes up he gets so upset because he is not shielded from the sun and the sand. Jonah gets upset at God and then God asks him a very important question: do you care more about the plant than you do the 120,000 people that will die if they don’t repent? How many times do you and I care more about things that don’t matter than do matter? For example, I was so upset that UT lost the national championship game. I was in a bad mood all night and the next day, but I don’t get upset over the children in RR who are going to bed hungry. That is just wrong!

Let’s learn from Jonah two things: get rid of discrimination and care more about the things of God.
