

ECHOES

January 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



Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

*Notes From
Pastor Dave*

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! Christmas has come and gone, the toys have been played with, the torn wrapping paper has been thrown out... and it is back to work and back to school and back to normal life again.... Or is it?

There is something special about January. It is full of new beginnings. When I lived up North, there was often a coating of snow that made everything look new in January. It made the world look pure and clean and fresh. The world is a clean slate in January.

I think it really starts in December with Christmas, and baby in the manger. When you see a baby, you know that anything is possible for that child. He or she could become a captain of industry, a doctor or researcher who will cure cancer, perhaps even the president of the United States someday.

But this isn't just any baby, this baby is God, and as long as we don't throw Christmas out with the wrapping paper, this baby will change our lives.

I don't think that it is a coincidence that Christmas comes at the time the least amount of sunlight of the year. Day by day we will see more of the sun, and this hemisphere will gradually warm up and before you know it, spring will be on the way. Christmas is the coming of the light.

You can also tell that something is going on when you see others beginning to make New Year's resolutions. I think that it is all of these things together -- word of a Savior, increasing light, people wanting to make positive changes and live better lives -- that we can feel the very power and presence of God.

Paul writes that "in Christ, we are a new creation." It's true. I know that sometimes we can dwell on the problems or failures of the past, but one of the reasons we celebrate Christmas every single year is to remind us that God is with us, and that our sins are forgiven, and that God has opened up a new future for us. That's also why we start every Sunday service with confession and forgiveness -- to clear away the failures and to make a fresh, forgiven start. And that is why we have the opportunity to come to Holy Communion -- not just because Jesus said, "Do this..." but also so we can directly experience God and have a fresh new start.

God gives you a fresh start today. A new beginning. The opportunities are amazing. How will you use this new beginning, this fresh start? Today is the chance to make a commitment to a closer walk with God, a regular time of devotion and study and prayer each day. Today is the chance to commit to working on and improving a relationship with someone close to you. Today is the chance to commit to taking better care of your body through a better diet and exercise. Today is the chance to commit to stretching your mind and improving yourself intellectually.

What will you do with this new start, this new day, this new season, this new year? You are forgiven. The possibilities are endless. How will you thank God and give Him glory? What will you use this new day for?

In Christ, you are a new creation. Thank God!

Filled with possibilities,

Pastor

Pastor



Operating Budget:

Jan– Nov 2009 Income	\$666,601	(92.78% Projected Income)
Jan– Nov 2009 Expense	\$660,745	(96.01% Projected Expense)
Net income over expense	\$ 5,856	

We will be saying “good-by & thank you “to one of our very valued volunteers, Kristi Hanzlik. Kristi has resigned as our Hand Bell Director, effective the first of January in anticipation of the arrival of her and Stuart’s second child. Kristi has served faithfully since the fall of 2001 as our Bell Choir Director. She has used her many talents to develop this group to become what they are today. Kristi will be missed in this role, but she plans to remain as a member of Palm Valley. Thank you, Kristi for your years of faithful service.

Obviously, with Kristi’s departure, we will need a new leader for the Bell Choir. If you are talented in this area and would enjoy working with this group, please give me a call here at the office, we would be happy to hear from you.

Family photos from our new pictorial directory are now available online at our website. To see them, login through the member link, select “Directories” header, select “Family” as the directory type, select “Pictorial Directory” then select the “Preview” button at bottom right. Your directory will then display with any available photos.

If you like to simplify your life and automate your contributions, direct deposit may be made through our website. As you will recall those of you using “Simply Giving” program direct deposits will end Dec. 31, 2009, but if you enjoy having this convenience, please check it out on the website. (ACH link) If you need our assistance please send me an email, we will be happy to accommodate.

Offering envelopes 2010 - If you have not picked up your offering envelopes that you signed up for please do so, as we still have a few remaining. They are located on a table at the double doors in the narthex at the porte-cochere.

Annual Meeting time is upon us. Please mark your calendar for January 31st at 12:30pm in the Sanctuary for our annual meeting. Please remember that according to our Constitution, in order to be a voting member you must be **Confirmed**, have

Communed (of record) and have **Contributions** (of record) for 2009 or before Jan 24th 2010. Plan to be with us for this important meeting to elect new Council members, to approve our 2010 Operating Budget and to make decisions that are very important to PVLC regarding the recent resolutions approved by the ELCA in August.

Every year, we have someone who delivers their check to us after the first of January for the prior year, and we have to disappoint them by saying “sorry, you missed the deadline”. Please remember that for your contribution to count for the year 2009, it must be in the church office prior to December 31st at midnight or be postmarked by midnight on the 31st. Sorry, we didn’t make that rules we just have to live by it, so thanks for understanding.

Remember, contribution statements will be mailed the first week of January, please review them immediately. Please call me with any corrections before Jan 15th as the books will be closed and no corrections can be made after that. Also you may go online at the PVLC website at any time after the 6th and review your contribution statement for 2009 as well. Remember you must have your current email address on record with us here at the office to access your records. This will also come in handy when you are working on your taxes and you can’t locate the statement we mailed to you in January.

Please remember that the church office will be closed on **Dec 24th, 25th and again on the 31st and January 1st** for the holidays and we will be home enjoying our families. Please know we want to and enjoy serving you, but we too look forward to some “time away” from the phones.

I wish for you and your family a blessed and safe Christmas holiday, as we remember Christ as the reason for the season.

En Agape

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

Church Council

Voting Process January 31st 2010

Summary of action taken at the called meeting of the Palm Valley Lutheran Church Council on Wednesday, November 18, 2009.

- † Authorized Pastor Koppel to ask individuals to be on the Nominating Committee.
- † Set the date for the Annual Congregational Meeting for Palm Valley Lutheran Church to be January 31, 2010 after the conclusion of the 11:15 am service.
- † Voted to retain legal counsel to determine what Palm Valley Lutheran Church's options are with regard to our property and other assets should we leave the ELCA based on Texas law. This expense shall be limited to no more than \$5,000.
- † Accepted the resignation of Herb Wolff effective at the conclusion of the Annual Congregational Meeting in January.
- † Accepted the resignation of Kristi Hanzlik as Director of the Jubilate Ringers Handbell Choir.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Cotton
Council Secretary

Adult Forum - January 24th

We plan to have an Adult Forum on Jan. 24th at 10:00am in the CLC and the same information will be repeated on Jan 31st at 10.am.

The purpose of this forum is for you to meet the new council candidates and to review the budget prior to the vote to adopt it at the Annual congregation meeting to be held at 12:30 on the 31st.

There will also be time for dialogue regarding the results of the recent surveys completed by the congregation. We hope that you will plan to attend one of these forums.

In years past the monitoring of voting privilege at Palm Valley has been somewhat relaxed with regard to confirming ones eligibility to cast a vote. Due to the critical nature of the issues facing our congregation at our January 31st 2010 annual meeting, guidelines will be monitored and adhered to. Decisions related to the ELCA resolutions passed in August, could result in a vote as to whether or not to leave the ELCA, thus the critical nature of the vote.

Per our constitution, "a member must be an *active member* that has been (a) confirmed, as well as have (b) communed (recorded) and (c) have a contribution of record "during the year of 2009 up to the Sunday before the annual meeting in this case January 24th". This will enable us to post that contribution and allow us time to print out our official list of "eligible" voters. Again, loose cash in the plate will not constitute an eligible voter; it must be identifiable with either a check or cash in an envelope with your name written on it.

On the Sunday of our meeting (January 31st), you will be asked to clear the sanctuary following the 11:15 service, and go to the narthex where you will see tables set up with several people to assist you, much as you would experience in a state or national election.

There you will be asked to sign your name next to your printed name on the official list of voters, and at that time you will be handed ballots for the meeting. There are issues of grave concern to be decided and only "eligible voters" will be provided with ballots.

If you wish to confirm that your name will be on that list and that you are an eligible voter prior to that meeting, you may contact Mollie DeVries at the church office (8-5 M-F) prior to the 24th of January.

Please remember that in Texas, individuals under the age of 18 are not able to deal with property issues, thus they would be unable to cast a vote.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Preschool News

We're starting off the New Year at the preschool celebrating WINTER! The kids will learn about snow, ice, snowmen, penguins, polar bears and much more. We'll keep warm wearing our most snuggly pajamas on Pajama Day and we'll enjoy playing in the "snow," "ice skating" and "sledding" on Snow Day.

There are still openings in our program. Please help us spread the word! Preschool information can be found on our website, palmvalleypreschool.org, or by calling the preschool office at (512)388-5054. Feel free to email us at abc123@palmvalleypreschool.org.

Radio Sponsor & Altar Flower Sponsor Charts

Sponsor charts for 2010 for radio and flowers are posted on the bulletin boards for your opportunity to sign up for the dates you want. Radio Sponsorships are \$70. Altar Flower Sponsorships are \$45. Thank you for helping to beautify our Church!

Bell Choir Director

Needed: One individual who enjoys music, (especially hand bell music) and has the talent to lead and work with a team of bell ringing, fun loving, great individuals who enjoy making a joyful noise unto the Lord.

We need a new Director for our Bell Choir, and if you have any interest, please contact Mollie DeVries at 255-3322 in our church office.

Generally the choir has practice on Wednesday evenings at 6pm and they play for services on an arranged schedule. This is a volunteer position, so the hours are great and the pay is terrific, as you earn "stars in your crown" with the Lord, and the appreciation of your congregation.

*** **Next Echoes Deadline** ***
Wednesday January 20, 2010

Women's News January Calendar

Tuesday, weekly, 1:00 p.m.	Afternoon Quilters
Wednesday, Jan 13, 12:00 p.m.	Noon Prayer Group
Friday, Jan 15, 6:30 p.m.	Adults' Night Out
Saturday, Jan 16, 4:00 p.m.	Circulo de Mujeres Marta
Monday, Jan 18, 6:15 p.m.	Sing-Along @ TCC
Tuesday, Jan 19, 10:00 a.m.	Esther Circle
Friday, Jan 21, 6:30 p.m.	Rebecca Circle
Friday, Jan 25, 6:30 p.m.	Sassy Seniors
Thursday, Jan 28, 3:00 p.m.	Cluster @ Trinity Care Center

Church Decoration Removal

Worship and Music Committee will be coordinating the removal of the Christmas decorations in the church on Monday January 4, 6:00 p.m. Contact Sheila Smith if you have any questions.

Poinsettias

If you ordered one of the lovely poinsettias decorating the church, don't forget to pick your poinsettia plant up by January 4, 2010.

Sassy Seniors

Sassy Seniors will not meet in December. We will tentatively meet on January 25, 2010, at Hunan Lion, 1208R N. IH35, Round Rock, Texas. Watch the bulletin inserts for further information.

We are in the process of one last ballot to determine future cafes each month January/November of each year. If you have not voted and want to, please contact me. Tabulation will be made after the January meeting.

We will select several cafes to be rotated after January. If you consider yourself senior, you are welcome. No RSVP needed.



HISPANIC

Ministry

By Pastor Figueroa

MUCHAS GRACIAS (THANKS SO MUCH)

Even though the setting of Thanksgiving Day celebration in the annual calendar it does not have anything to do with the liturgical calendar, I think it has been set in the right place, because I strongly believe that we cannot come to know Jesus as Savior without a grateful heart.

Thanksgiving Day give us the opportunity to see and reflect on God's multiple blessings and in some way prepare our hearts and minds to go into the Advent season with a sense of appreciation and anticipation to know God who come to this world in human flesh through Jesus as baby.

So, in order to be ready to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord in Christmas we need to realize that everything comes from God Creator and consequently, develop a deep sense of gratitude and thanksgiving.

Following this line of thought, before talking about Christmas, I want to thank God and all of you PV members that responded to my call to raise funds to help poor Salvadoran children to go to school. It was fun and healthy to run the half marathon in San Antonio November 15 but it was really wonderful to know that I raised \$2000 which means that we are sending next year 8 poor kids to school.

When I think about my 4 month of training waking up early morning to run 3-4 miles every day shine or rain, the stress caused to my working schedule and the efforts on race day going to San Antonio on Saturday to be able to be at the start line at 7AM on Sunday, I can say that all efforts were worthy and gladly I plan to do it again for as long as Our Lord gives me strength and health. Thanks PV member for all your support.

Including a taco sale and other contributions we have been able to send to the Lutheran Church in El Salvador \$3,200 to be allocated as follow: \$2000 to send next year 8 kids to school, \$800 to pay for school supplies

for "God's Blessing" Lutheran Church children in Quezaltepeque, \$100 for the Lutheran Church in Guaymango's Children Christmas program, \$100 for the School for Disabled children's Christmas program and \$200 to help Salvadoran Synod street children project. On behalf of the PV 2009 ES Mission trip and all the people involved in this fund raising, thanks you all for your generosity.

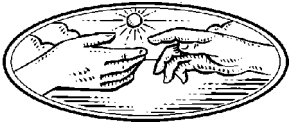
Now, with a grateful heart we are ready to talk about Christmas. While consumerism promoted by commerce try to convince us that this is the time to party and exchange gifts, we Christians reflect on the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and we remember with gratitude that God loves so much the world that sent His only Son to die for our sins.

As part of the Advent season and trying to focus on the reason of the season we are having Posadas in different Latino Church member's homes. These are family, friends and neighbors gatherings in which we reenact Jesus and pregnant Mary journey looking for a place to stay. We dress a couple of kids as Jesus and Mary and we sing Christmas carols; then we enjoy goodies like tamales, champurrado (a Mexican home made hot beverage), cookies and candies for children.

On behalf of PV Hispanic Ministry as I thank all your support I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed and Healthy New Year. FELIZ NAVIDAD Y FELIZ AÑO NUEVO.

New Tuesday Night Bible Study

We will begin a 7-week Bible study of the book of Ephesians starting January 12th at 7pm in the Palm Room. Whether you are a veteran of Bible study or haven't looked at your Bible since confirmation or are anywhere in between, this course is for you. All that is required is a willingness to spend 15-30 minutes per week in preparation, a schedule that permits you to come to an hour-long class for seven consecutive weeks, and a heart that is open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, if you have a friend or neighbor who isn't active in a church or has never come to Christ, Ephesians presents a wonderful, concise explanation of what God has done for each of us, of how we accept God's free gift of salvation and how that acceptance can make a night and day difference in our life. There is a sign up sheet for the class on the bulletin board.



Social Ministry

ARE GENERIC DRUGS A GOOD OPTION?

As the cost of prescription drugs continues to escalate, consumers are looking for cost containment in acceptable ways. One consideration is to take generic drugs in place of brand name drugs to lower costs. A generic drug is a copy of a brand name drug. It works the same as a brand name drug.

Are generic drugs safe?

The FDA requires that all drugs are safe and effective. Generic drugs use the same substances and work the same way in the body as brand name drugs do. So they have the same risks and benefits as the brand name drug.

Are they as strong as brand name drugs?

Yes. The FDA demands that generic drugs are just as strong, pure, and stable as brand name drugs. They must also be the same quality.

Will they take longer to work in my body?

No. Generics work in the same way and in the same amount of time as brand name drugs.

Why are they cheaper?

New drugs are developed under patents. A patent gives only that one company the right to sell the drug for a period of time. This protects those who create the drug and pay to research, develop, and market it. Other companies can apply to the FDA to sell a generic of that drug when the patent is about to expire. They can then sell that drug at a lower cost because they don't have the expense of creating the drug. Today almost half of all prescriptions are filled with generic drugs.

Are brand name drugs made in better factories?

No. Both brand name and generic drugs factories must meet the same standards. Often the same factories make both.

Why don't the drugs look the same?

In the US, laws do not allow a generic drug to look exactly like the brand name drug. A generic drug must use the same substances, but colors, flavors, and some other inactive parts may be different.

Does every brand name drug have a generic form?

No. Brand name drugs are protected by patent for 20 years. When the patent expires, other drug companies can create generics.

What is the best source of information about generic drugs? Contact your doctor, pharmacist, or insurance company for information on generic drugs.

(Information taken from FDA Center for Drug Evaluation and Research)

Christian Education Notes

A HUGE thank you to Leah Murphy for directing this year's Children's Program, "A Christmas Journey". Her devotion to our children is a reflection of God's love. Thank you Leah!

JAM will resume on Wednesday, January 6th. JAM (Jesus and Me) is fun & fellowship for Kindergarteners-2nd graders on Wednesday evenings from 6-7:15pm in the Parish Hall. JAM is led by Leah Murphy and Elizabeth Osborn. Please contact Leah for more information.

EXIT 345 has been cancelled for 2010. Please contact Cheree Peterson with questions.

Sunday School Social – 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. If weather is a factor, we will meet in the Parish Hall. We will have a monthly social on the 2nd Sunday of each month, so mark your calendar. See you there!

The Christian Education committee will meet on All Committee Night which is Monday, January 4th from 7pm-9pm. Come see what we have planned for 2010 – we're going to Egypt for Vacation Bible School, planning monthly Sunday School socials, continuing our Faithweaver curriculum, and planning an exciting Rally Day! We start in the Parish Hall with an opening led by Pastor Koppel and start our meeting after that. Child-care is available, please contact Mollie Devries to make reservations for your kids.

Mark your Calendars – Vacation Bible School 2010 "Egypt: Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace" will be held August 2 – 6th in the mornings for 4 year olds – 5th grade. The planning committee will start meeting after the first of the year. If you are interested in helping in anyway, please contact Cheree Peterson.

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!



Thank You

From: Doris Wallin—A sincere “Thank You” to all who came to help me celebrate my 90th birthday. For all the cards and good wishes! It was a wonderful day!

From: Vivian & Grant Gee—We want each and every one of our Palm Valley Family to know how much we appreciate your prayers, cards, and support during the trying days of the passing of Vivian’s brother Paul Tucker. Our heart-felt thanks go out to each of you.

From: Jan & Brady Behrens and family— Thanks to all our church family for your cards, phone calls, and especially your prayers during my Dad’s (Earl Wiley) illness and death. Your love and caring means so much at this time.

From: Beth Schroeder— I would love to say many many thanks to everyone who sent cards, made calls and visited me following my knee replacement and then again for my gall bladder surgery. I also want to say thanks to Pastor Koppel and Pastor Tietz for their visits and calls. The many prayers have been such a blessing and have made my days go much better. Thanks to my church family!

From: Paula Dietz and family—Many thanks for the cards, calls, prayers, and hugs following the unexpected death of my older brother. It truly is comforting to know that there are so many caring, compassionate people in our church family. Your thoughtfulness, however you expressed it to us, is much appreciated.

From: Barbara Haynes— Thanks for the numerous prayers and visits from Pastor Tietz and Pastor Koppel. Thanks to the members who sent cards, called and kept me in their thoughts and prayers during my recent hospitalization and recovery. God Bless.

From: Pat Zinke & Katherine Wallin— Thank you to all of those who participated in the TBCH Christmas Gift Project. It was a huge success! As a former resident (Katherine) of TBCH, I especially appreciate all of you!! Thank you to the Fall Fair for the grant to this project.

Palm Valley Volunteers

Thank you to all of the many volunteers that have helped make Palm Valley function each and every week of 2009. Palm Valley is what it is because of you and your service unto the Lord.

May you all be blessed!

Special Thanks to these Helpers with the December Echoes

Johnnie Pecht
Ann Grimes
Emily Fehlis

Herb Wolff
Jean Kammer
Ina Woodbury

**All Committee Night, 7:00 p.m.
Monday January 4 — Parish Hall**

**Church Council 7:00 p.m.
Wednesday January 13 – Conference Room**



**Jesus said.....
Deny, Die and Follow.....**

December Youth Calendar

Every Sunday	Adult/Sr. High Volleyball	4:00–6:00 pm
Jan 6	Youth Bible Study	6:00–8:00 pm
Jan 6	JAM & EXIT 345	6:00–7:15 pm
Jan 13	Youth Bible Study	6:00–8:00 pm
Jan 13	JAM & EXIT 345	6:00–7:15 pm
Jan 20	Youth Bible Study	6:00–8:00 pm
Jan 20	JAM & EXIT 345	6:00–7:15 pm
Jan 27	Youth Bible Study	6:00–8:00 pm
Jan 27	JAM & EXIT 345	6:00–7:15 pm

Acolyte & Crucifer schedule for January

	<u>8:00</u>	<u>9:00</u>	<u>11:15</u>
Jan 3	Ac: Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
Jan 10	Ac: Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
	Cr.: Volunteer Needed		Volunteer Needed
Jan 17	Ac: Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
Jan 24	Ac: Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
	Cr. Volunteer Needed		Volunteer Needed
Jan 31	Ac: Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed	Volunteer Needed
	Cr. Volunteer Needed		Volunteer Needed

**Wednesday Night Café
and Bible Study 6-12th Grade**

The first youth group of 2010 will be Wednesday January 6th. The café will be open and we will be off and rolling on a new, fun, and exciting year.

Disciple Now Weekend

It is not too late to sign up for the Disciple Now Weekend. If your child hasn't signed up yet, then get them signed up.

The Disciple Now is the weekend of January 8-10th and is for those students in 6th-12th grade. This is a great weekend of growing in faith while staying right here in the Round Rock area. The weekend will include worship time together, small group Bible studies, games, and a whole lot of fun.

The cost of the weekend is \$30 which covers all meals, materials as well as a T-shirt. You can get a form off the church's website or off of the youth bulletin board. Deadline to register is Wednesday January 6th.

Letter from Les

Have you ever paid that close of attention to the words of Jesus? He said some pretty radical things when you think about it. For example, look at Luke 9:23, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Jesus is talking to his twelve closest friends when he is saying this. He tells them that if they are to continue to be his disciples (students) the first thing they must do is deny themselves. This means that the desires in their hearts are to be denied for the desires in God's heart. They can no longer go on living for the things they want to live for, but must now live for the things of God. The second thing is to take up their cross daily. This statement probably shocked the disciples. What would you say to a person today who said, "If you are to be my disciple you must take up the lethal injection needle and daily inject yourself?" The idea here is that the old life, the life full of sinful habits, must be killed and new habits formed. The only way for these new habits, the new way of life to be experienced is by daily putting to death the old way of life, thus we must take up our cross daily and die. The last thing is the easiest, but perhaps the hardest: follow. Anyone can play follow the leader, but can you play it when Jesus says things like "love your enemy," or "bless those who persecute you." That makes following Jesus pretty tough. So, why would Jesus say to deny, die and follow him? He says it for *our* joy. Jesus knows what will bring us the greatest amount of joy and that is from a relationship with him. In denying, dying and following we will actually be living the most abundant joy filled life. On the weekend of January 8-10th the youth will be participating in the Disciple Now weekend where we will look even more at what it means to deny, die and follow.

JAM & EXIT 345

JAM will be starting back on Wednesday January 6th at 6pm in the Parish Hall. If you have a child that is in Kindergarten through 2nd grade send them to JAM. Due to various reasons Exit 345 will not be meeting in the Spring of 2010. If you have any questions contact Cheree Peterson.