

ECHOES

January 2012

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



*Notes From
Pastor Dave*

Watching vs. Doing and Being

Taste and see that the Lord is good. (Psalm 34:8)

When I come home in the evening, I often find members of my family watching the food channel. I don't even know the names of the shows – there's one about diners around the country, one about making meals with a mystery ingredient, one about a contest between people who want to become Food Network stars with their own shows, and I think there are a couple dedicated to making outrageous cakes.

Those programs do two things for me: they make me hungry and they often make me bored. It's not that I don't think that food is interesting; it's just that I would rather cook or bake something than watch somebody else do it.

I used to be a camp cook and prepared three meals a day for 400 kids. While I don't have a great desire to go back and do that again, I do enjoy cooking. It's a chance to be creative, a chance to do something with my hands. There is a beginning, a middle, and an end to the process. In most cases, it relieves some of my stress, and I get a kick out of it when someone enjoys what I have prepared. (Of course if I am just tired and hungry, sometimes it isn't much fun at all, but if I have a little time I like to cook.)

I think what I don't like about food shows is the middle. The long middle part. I like to see what ingredients go in, and I like to see the finished product, but I don't want to watch somebody chop up the vegetables or make the sauce simmer. To me, that's almost as much fun as watching golf on TV. There are a hundred other things that I'd rather be doing. If I watch TV, I'd just as soon be entertained. If I am thinking about cooking, I'd just as soon cook.... And eat! When you watch a cooking show on TV, you don't get to smell or taste the food. It's an exercise in frustration. I'd rather cook. I'd rather be involved in the

Palm Valley Lutheran Church A Stephen Ministry Church

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Round Rock, Texas 78665
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Rev. Dr. David P. Koppel, Senior Pastor
Rev. Joaquin Figueroa, Hispanic Ministry
Rev. David Tietz, Visitation Minister
Mollie DeVries, Executive Administrator
Anna Froehlich, Youth Director

process, all the way through, not just watch and never get a taste. That's how many of us go through life. How many of us know about Jesus, but don't actually know Jesus? How many of us know facts about Jesus' life and ministry, but don't have any personal involvement with Him? And then we think, "Wow, sometimes church is boring. Sometimes Christianity seems irrelevant."

Well, of course. It's like watching a cooking show and never actually cooking! It's like hearing a story about some incredibly delicious food, and never actually tasting any. Sometimes we go through the motions of life instead of really living it. Sometimes we go through the motions of faith, without actually experiencing God.

So how do we do that? We develop the habits that go with a growing faith. We spend time with God every day. We read the Bible every day. We pray every day. We worship Him every week. We give – not a mere token – but actually give and invest in God's work in the world every week. We roll up our sleeves and get involved either at our church or beyond it in the community, but we go out and make a difference. We get into a small group of other Jesus followers, where we get to know each other, and we learn together and pray for each other and make ourselves accountable to each other.

And, in the process, we get to know God, and we develop a relationship with Him and with other Christians. And life becomes infinitely richer and more meaningful, and our faith and worship become more and more relevant to our life. Don't just get to know about Jesus. Get to know him. Begin to build in some habits today to start a relationship. Don't just sit back and watch, uninvolved. Get involved. Participate. The more you do, the stronger your relationship with God becomes. There is no better day than today to start.

In His Grip,

Pastor



Church Operating Budget:

January – Nov. 2011 Income \$707,997 (103% Projected Income for 11 months)

January – Nov. 2011 Expense \$699,375 (99% Projected Expense for 11 months)

Net \$ 8,622

It All Belongs To God; we only act on behalf of the owner....

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.”

These are certainly inspiring thoughts, in fact the kind that would find their way into great hymns of Christian Faith by very talented individuals.

However, in the real world of toil and sweat, we humans jealously lay claim to all property. Every dollar bill that is printed belongs to someone. Land, houses, boats, cars and even bikes may be traced to their owners.

There is certainly a prevailing feeling that what people do with “their own property” is nobody else’s business. So if that is true, what practical application is there for those great hymns and majestic Bible verses which speak of God’s ownership?

The divine message is an important reminder to each and every one of us that all property in this world is only leased to us for a certain period of time. We don’t really own anything. We only get to use it for a short while. We are only the stewards while we walk this earth...

As the parables of Jesus make very clear, the good steward is enterprising, appropriately aggressive, shrewd, and generous.

What truly matters is not whether we are at liberty to do exactly as we please with our possessions, but instead whether we use them in a way that is pleasing to the Eternal Owner of all things.

What will still be “ours”, one hundred years from today, of our present holdings? Stop and think about that.

I believe Jesus suggested an answer in his reference of the “treasures we may lay up in heaven.” Those future treasures are directly governed by the way we use our present possessions, right here and now. Let’s be mindful of who allows us to enjoy that which he provides. And let’s be generous this Advent season with our fellow man with what God has allowed us to be the steward over.

Don’t forget:

Offering envelopes 2012 - If you have not picked up your offering envelopes please do so. They are located on a table at the double doors in the narthex at the portecochere

If you like to simplify your life you may wish to automate your contributions. Try direct deposit through our website. If you enjoy this convenience, please check it out on the PVLC website. (ACH link)

Annual Meeting time is upon us. Please mark your calendar for January 29th following the service 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 2011. Plan to be with us for this important meeting to elect new Council members and to approve our 2012 Operating Budget.

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 2011, it must be in the church office prior to December 31st at midnight (Remember offices are closed on that Friday). **Contributions** mailed to the church must have a post mark no later than midnight Dec. 31st 2011 to appear on your 2011 contribution statement; otherwise they will appear on the 2012 report, per IRS guidelines Sorry, we have to live by IRS rules, so thanks for understanding.

Please note our schedule! Church office will be closed on Friday, Dec 23 & Monday Dec 26th and again on Friday the 30th and Monday, Jan 2ndst for the holidays. We will be home enjoying our families as you do. 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 we celebrate the season.

En Agape

Mollie

Mollie DeVries, CCA
Executive Administrator

Church Council Report

Summary of action taken at the regular meeting of the Palm Valley Lutheran Church Council on Wednesday, December 21, 2011:

Adult Forum

We plan to have an Adult Forum on Sunday, January 22, 2012 at **10:00** a.m. in the CLC and the same information will be repeated on Sunday, January 29 at **9:00** a.m.

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 approximately 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, January 29. We hope that you will plan to attend one of these forums.

Next Council Meeting
Wednesday, January 11 at 7:00 p.m.

Next All Committee Night
Tuesday, January 3 at 7:00 p.m.
Childcare is provided.

Notice of Annual Congregational Meeting

*January 29, 2012
following our 10:00 joint worship
and meal in the CLC,
approximately 12:30 pm, in the Sanctuary*

Topic: Voting of new Council Members
and adopting a new budget for 2012.

WOMEN

News and Events

of Palm Valley Lutheran Church

January Calendar

Tues., weekly, 1:00 p.m.	Quilters
Wed., Jan 11, 12:00 p.m.	Prayer Group
Mon., Jan 16, 5:45 p.m.	Sing-Along @ TCC
Tues., Jan 17, 10:00 a.m.	Esther Circle
Thurs., Jan 19, 2:00 p.m.	Rebecca Circle
Thurs., Jan 19, 2:00 p.m.	Adults' Night Out
Sat., Jan 21, 4:00 p.m.	Circulo de Mujeres Marta
Mon., Jan 23, 7:00 p.m.	Sassy Seniors
Thurs., Jan 26, 3:00 p.m.	Cluster

Men's Banquet

Mark your calendar now for our annual Men's Banquet which will be held on **Feb. 23rd 2012**. Tickets will be on sale late January.

Tentative Schedule for Sassy Seniors in 2012

January 23	Hunan Lion,RR
February 27	Logan's Roadhouse,RR
March 26	Mimi's, RR
April 23	Saltgrass, RR
May 28	Olive Garden, RR
June 25	Macaroni Grill, RR
July 25	Red Lobster, RR
August 27	Springhill, Pflugerville
September 24	Mimi's, RR
October 22	Saltgrass, RR
November 26	Olive Garden, RR
December	no meeting

All above should be the 4th Monday of each month.
Meeting time 6:30 pm. We eat and visit.
All who consider themselves senior are welcome.
No RSVP needed.



“Listening to God”

By Pastor Figueroa

This is the time of the year when we are engaged, in one way or another, to find a feasible “new year resolution.” The mere fact that we are talking about a “new year” resolution means in itself that we consider we need a “fresh restart” doing something “different and able to produce different results.” This means that there are some things in our lives with which we are not comfortable and happy, and we want a positive change: It could be losing weight, dedicating more time to family, going back to school etc.

These are all good resolutions; but today, I want to propose a better resolution for this New Year. What about “to improve our conscious contact with God” for 2012? Conscious contact with God, that is to say, being able to hear God’s voice, comes only after prayer and meditation, which is more that reading and sending to others the spiritual messages we receive online every day. We read the Bible, study it, have a daily devotional, etc; but ***do we really have a conscious contact with the Creator of heaven and earth?***

Conscious contact with God means receiving direct guidance from God, as the book of Proverbs says “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” I believe it is crucial and essential for Christians to have a real dialogue with God because everything, and I mean everything, in our lives goes through God’s filter because we have his divine DNA.

In order to talk and listen to God and ask that he guide our lives and respond to our needs we need a *quiet time*. This is a time we set aside every day to have an appointment with our Father God to express our feelings and thoughts to Him, and to discern his guidance.

What follow are some practical ways to have a quiet time:

- Commit to setting aside a minimum of 10 to 20 minutes daily.
- Choose a *sacred space*- a quiet place where you can be alone. It should be inviting and comfortable
- Sit in an upright posture, or if you are able, go down on your knees. Remember into whose presence you are entering.

- Read a Bible passage (I suggest you start with the Book of Psalms).
- Breathe deeply 3 or 4 times – let go of all tension and worry with each outward breath.
- If you have a problem that is troubling you, or one on which you really need God’s guidance, write it out and ask Him. For example: God, what do I need to do to get ____? Lord, please show me where am I being resentful, selfish, dishonest, or afraid? Jesus, what would you have me to do about ____?

Listen for God’s voice and write the words that come into your mind. Try not to edit them. Only listen and write them. If words come that you think are not from God, write them any way. Put them in brackets, if you like, and try to re-focus on listening for God’s voice. In time, you will come to distinguish his voice clearly from the voice of the ego.

If all this seems too difficult at first, then try simply to look at the day ahead and ask God to guide you in your day. If something comes up that day that is troubling for you, ask for God’s guidance on what you should do. This is so, because we face indecision every day. Very often we may not be able to determine which course to take. If this is the case, we need to ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while.

Share your thoughts and God’s responses with your spiritual director or your Bible study group and then act on your guidance. ***BUT ONLY*** if what you are guided to do passes the test of being: ***Honest, Pure, Unselfish and Loving***, which are the basic and absolute principles upon which the Bible was written. I wish you the best in this New Year.

And now a word of appreciation: When I realized that thanks to your generosity we have collected \$5000.00 to help Salvadoran kids to go to school, I forgot immediately my pain in legs and back and I became ready to run another couple of half marathons in 2012. Thanks, many thanks (*muchas gracias*) on behalf of those poor kids that through your kindness will be able to go to school one more year. Together we are making a difference in the life of these little brothers and sisters of Jesus. Honor and glory be given to God.

Thank You

To my Church family, I want to thank everyone for all their prayers, well wishes, cards, calls, meals, caring and concern during my recent hospital stay. It was wonderful to have Pastors Koppel and Tietz stop by and visit with me at the hospital. Your continued prayers will get me through the tough times ahead. The love and support from everyone brings great comfort and hope. God bless you all!

Nancy, Larry, Kelly and Brad Wiswell

We would like to thank everyone who came to our retirement home to serenade us with some beautiful and favorite Christmas carols. You made our day. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Bill and Gloria Flagg

We want to extend sincere, heartfelt thanks to all of our Palm Valley family for the many prayers, cards, phone calls and personal condolences extended after the death of my brother Walt on November 12th.

Hal and Polly Huth

I want to thank Palm Valley Lutheran Church for your recent help with rent assistance. It, along with support from other organizations, helped me tremendously. I am so thankful. Thank you for caring in a very real way.

Nicole (an Austin resident)

Thank you for the cards, calls and prayers after my car was totaled by a pickup speeding through a red light.

Lesson: seat belts do save lives.

Darlene Miller

Thank you all so much for your kind words, beautiful sentiments and most of all for your many prayers. Your sympathy and support meant a great deal to us.

Pat Zinke, Truly Zinke Spracklin,
Wendy Zinke O'Brian

Thank you to the Christmas carolers who came to our house. You brought music, song, and fellowship that we enjoyed so very much! Thank you for giving your time and talents to bring Christmas joy to us.

Robert and Helen Griffith

(Continued on page 6)

The Back Pack Project Ministry

The Round Rock Back Pack Project, which provides weekend food for needy children, has been serving nine elementary schools in the RRISD this school year. PVLC volunteers in conjunction with other community churches have distributed more than one and a half tons of food to children on the free or reduced meals program. SonRise Ministry, First United Methodist Church, started the program last spring in one school with approximately 50 children. It has grown to now serve 350 children in the district.

All of the children served, pre-k through 5th grade, are children whose parents work, but after the bills are paid, there is not much money left for food. The goal is to make sure these children have enough food for Saturday and Sunday. Non perishable, single serving food is provided in back packs on Fridays to children referred by the school personnel.

Volunteers are needed Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8:00 PM to stock groceries or pack bags for delivery to schools on Friday. Bags are packed at the Round Rock Chapel offices. Volunteers are also need to hand out back packs at the two schools Palm Valley is serving this year, Double File and Union Hill.

To volunteer or for more information, contact Jill Lampi.

Donations of food are welcome at all times. All food items must be non perishable and in single serving format. They are available at most grocery stores including Wal-Mart. Food items can be left at church in the labeled buckets outside the CLC and in the Narthex.

The items needed are as follows:

- Ramen Noodles
- Breakfast bars or granola bars
- Vienna sausage
- 100% fruit juice boxes
- Chef Boyardee single servings
- Soda crackers
- Mac and cheese single servings
- Cereal (individual boxes)
- Single serving vegetables
- Cheeseburger, hamburger helper (single serving)
- Single serving applesauce or fruit cups
- Popcorn (microwave)
- Snack crackers

(Continued from page 5 - Thank You)

Dear congregation members, On behalf of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, thank you of your generous gift of \$4681.85 and HEB gift cards. Your commitment to helping the victims of the Bastrop Fires, Labor Day week, 2011, in our community is sincerely appreciated. Thanks again for your generous support of our efforts to provide relief and assistance to the people of Bastrop County.

Rev. Charles R. Holm-Roeseler,
Pastor, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Thank you to all of the many volunteers that have helped make Palm Valley function each and every week of 2011. Palm Valley is what it is because of you and your service unto the Lord. May you all be blessed!

Administrative Staff

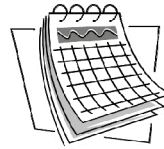
Explore the Meaning of Life

ALPHA is coming to Palm Valley starting February 12! Come be a part of it ...

Alpha is an opportunity to explore the meaning of life in a relaxed, friendly setting. The Alpha course will meet once a week for 10 weeks, and includes an amazing getaway. Each session, people enjoy great food, laughter and learning in a fun and friendly atmosphere where no question about life or God is seen as too simple or too hostile...questions like—Is there a God? Why am I here? Where did I come from? Where am I going?

Palm Valley is excited to start this program, with the faith that in coming years we will attract people from all backgrounds, religions, and viewpoints to come learn about Jesus' love for us in a non-threatening environment. Participants will come to investigate questions about the existence of God, the purpose of life, the after-life, the claims of Jesus and more. Some people want to get beyond religion and find a relationship with God that really changes life. Others come for the close, long-lasting friendships that are built during the Alpha course.

So come be a part of building this program that answers Jesus' command to "go make disciples of all nations." Questions? Talk with Susan Thompson or email smallgroups@pvlc.org.



Dates of Importance

***Church office will be closed
or the holidays on:***

Friday, December 23 - Monday, December 26, 2011

Friday, December 30 - Monday, January 2, 2012

Church Christmas Decoration Removal

Worship and Music Committee will be coordinating the removal of the Christmas decorations in the church on Tuesday, January 3, 6:00 p.m. Contact Sheila Smith if you have any questions.

Small Groups

Follow through with that New Year's resolution **to join a Small Group in 2012!** Or perhaps you're interested in starting a new study? Either way, talk with Susan Thompson or email smallgroups@pvlc.org to learn about the various small group offerings currently available.

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.

Nursery Help

We have some wonderful ladies who work in our nursery, but there are occasions when we have need of subs or for other special occasions even for some of our children who are too old for the nursery but yet we need to care for them. If you have interest, please contact Mollie DeVries to discuss the paid position.

mdevries@palmvalleylutheranchurch.org



**Children's Sunday School
for Ages 2 – 5th Grade 10:15am – 11am**

JAM-O-WEEN was so much fun. We had over 45 kids in attendance! We hope to offer other JAM (Jesus & Me) events in the future. If you feel God is calling you to volunteer to be a part of this important mid week ministry for our children, please let us know.

Would you like to meet other parents? Would your kids like some time to play with their church friends? Come fellowship with us at our monthly **Sunday school social**. Bring or grab a lunch for your family. We gather together in the CLC or the grove on the 2nd Sunday of each month right after Sunday school (11:00 ish). **This month's social will be the same Sunday as our Christmas Program, December 11th.**

It is a social and a "wrap party"! Every successful show has to have a wrap party! Join us! Bring a pot luck side or desert to share.

Youth Praise Team If you enjoy singing praise songs and are in 2nd-8th grader – come join the fun! Contact Pam Dieterich to join.

Children's Christmas Program & Live Nativity

The Children's Christmas program will be Sunday, December 11th during the 9am service. Children of all ages are encouraged to participate. We will also need youth and adult volunteers.

Our show will "go on the road" on Friday, December 9th. We will be performing a live Nativity at the annual Round Rock Family Christmas Night from 6:30-9:30 PM. For more information on the Christmas program or the live Nativity, talk to Tracy Nolan or email: childrensministry@pvlc.org

Next Children's Ministry Meeting – Come see what fun things we have going on with Children's ministry in 2012. We meet the first Monday of every month at 7pm at church. Our next meeting is Monday, December 5th! Please join us! For more information on Children's Ministry (2s – 5th grade), please email us at childrensministry@pvlc.org

Sunday school continues each Sunday with our brand new Spark curriculum. You can read more about the curriculum as well as find a full scope and sequence schedule for the year at: <http://www.activatefaith.org/curriculum/>. We are using the Lectionary series, which runs on a 3-year cycle. We are in year A-B.

Please join us for a brief opening for all ages at 10:15am in the Parish Hall each Sunday. We will sing songs, learn about the Bible lesson, celebrate birthdays and pray before children are dismissed to their classrooms listed below. Sunday school is from 10:15am-11:00am.

- 2s – Carrie & Ryan Jackson-Room 13
 - 3s – Beth Schroeder-Room 5
 - 4s – Erika Wulff-Room 9
 - Kindergarten – Christina Rendon-Room 12
 - 1st Grade – Susan Mathias & Christina Johansson-Room 1
 - 2nd Grade – Kim Clymer-Room 25
 - 3rd Grade – Lori Brill & Pam Boerst-Room 24
 - 4th & 5th Grade – Peter & Hans Curran-Room 19
- Sunday School Coordinator – Kim Kubala**

Poinsettias

If you ordered one of the lovely poinsettias decorating the church. Don't forget to pick your poinsettia plant up by Tuesday, January 3, 2012 . please leave the plate that is under the plant. Place it in front of the administrative office. Thank you.

***Special Thanks
to those who helped
assemble the Echoes:***

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Delpha Berg</i> | <i>Johnnie Pecht</i> |
| <i>Marion Fowler</i> | <i>Jean Kammer</i> |
| <i>Emily Fehlis</i> | <i>Pat Wolff</i> |

**Next Echoes Deadline:
Friday, January 20, 2012**



*Random thoughts
from my head to yours...*

Random thoughts from my head to yours....

The New Year is upon us and that mean new beginnings for us all. Most of us will make a New Years Resolutions, mine is to throw a dinner party every month for different friends.

The New Year also brings new actives for the youth. It is with this in mind that I want to tell you about our first big event of the year and that is **Disciple Now Weekend**. I would ask you to read the Following and see if you can help us in some area so that we can make this an *epic* event to start off the 2012

Disciple Now 2012... Everything you need to know

February 10-12, 2012

Theme: **Your Faith and Social Media**

What is Disciple Now?

Disciple Now centers on small-group discipleship for Jr. High and Sr. High Youth for the weekend. The weekend consists of prayer, Bible study, recreation, food, and relationship building. We will begin with a kick-off dinner a worship service in the CLC and concludes after the 9am service Sunday morning. The dates are Feb 10-12, 2012.

Why do we have Disciple Now? Disciple Now changes youth's lives. Spiritually it takes students out of their daily routines and gives them an opportunity to examine and enhance their relationship with Jesus. Socially, this weekend is the equivalent of several Sunday small group sessions with regards to youth feeling connected to other youth.

What can I do to help? We need Youth to participate. We need youth leaders, parents, and others to volunteer in various ways such as being host homes, drivers, cooks, and

clean up crews. If this is something that you would like to do, please contact Anna Froehlich for more details.

How much does it cost? If you register by Sunday, January 15, 2012 the cost is \$40. (\$50 after that date). The cost includes a t-shirt, all meals between Friday night dinner and Sunday morning breakfast, and devotional materials. (Note - T-shirt is only guaranteed for those that register by Jan 15.) Final registration deadline is Feb 5. Scholarships are available if cost is a concern.

Where can I sign up? Please go to:
www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E45AFAD2AA20-disciple

Then please send your payment to:
Palm Valley Lutheran Church
2500 E. Palm Valley Blvd.
Round Rock, TX 78665

Put "D-Now" in the memo line

Let me encourage you to set aside this special weekend! Youth, for you and Parents, for your teenager.

In his love,
Anna Froehlich
Office: (512) 255-3322

Email: youth@palmvalleylutheranchurch.org

2012 Upcoming events

- Jan 4 Scavenger hunt
- Jan 13-16 Southwest Synod Sr. High Youth Gathering in Austin
- July 18-21 National ELCA Youth Gathering New Orleans, LA
- February 10-12 Disciple Now Weekend

<p>Summer Camp 2012 July 1st-6th, 2012 1st-12th grades \$85.00 deposit due By March 1, 2012</p>
