

ECHOES

July 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

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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
Teri Hunt, Interim Director of Youth



Notes From Pastor Dave

"No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Dear Friends,

Fifty-six men signed the Declaration of Independence. Their conviction resulted in untold suffering for themselves and their families. Of the fifty-six men, five were captured by the British and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons in the revolutionary army. Another had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty-six fought and died from wounds or hardships of the war.

Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships sunk by the British navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts and died in poverty. At the battle of Yorktown, the British general Cornwallis had taken over Thomas Nelson's home for his headquarters. Nelson quietly ordered General George Washington to open fire on the Nelson home. The home was destroyed and Nelson died bankrupt. John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their thirteen children fled for their lives. His fields and mill were destroyed. For over a year, he lived in forest and caves, returning home only to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later, he died from exhaustion.

These men gave their all to the cause; they backed up their beliefs with their lives.

Today, Jesus calls us to give all to His cause, to back up our beliefs with our lives. He calls us to extreme discipleship: there is nothing halfway about it. He says to be a part of his cause involves total commitment.

And that's what this gospel passage is all about. Holding fast to the very best thing, even if it means letting go of some very, very good things to do that. That is extreme discipleship, unflinching devotion. Jesus is saying, don't let anything, ANYTHING, come between you and God, no matter how good or important it is.

The major problems of life happen to our community and our world when local family values, systems and loyalties, even ethnic, racial, and national loyalties, come between us and God.

Jesus says, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God." The image of putting your hand to the plow and not looking back-- or, more appropriate for today, driving your car forward while looking out the back window-- refers to looking back at all the very good things in our lives, like family and friends, comforts and satisfactions, while trying to follow Christ. It just isn't going to work!

Jesus asks us to commit to extreme discipleship. Nothing less will do. Our entire lives must be turned over to him -- our personal lives, our public lives, and our life as a congregation -- nothing can be held back. Only the ultimate good, the very best will do.

Will we have to give up some good things? If those things come in-between us and God.

There's a cost in living for what is really important. John Henry Jowett said, "Ministry that costs nothing, accomplishes nothing."

Celebrate Independence Day. Remember the sacrifices that were made for you and me. Follow in the footsteps of our founding fathers. Celebrate Jesus Christ. Remember His sacrifice, and follow in His footsteps.

In His grip,

Pastor

Financial Notes June 2010



January - May 2010 Income
January - May 2010 Expense
Net

Church Operating Budget:

\$ 339,709 (96.59% Projected Income)
\$ 318,046 (94.72% Projected Expense)
\$ 21,663

Within the next month you will begin to see evidence of our Cemetery Phase II project begin to kick into gear. Two years ago the Cemetery had a Capital Fund Campaign and raised funds for improvements in the cemetery. Phase I was the construction of the entrance arch that was completed last summer. It has certainly added a very nice touch to our facilities.

Phase II is to add additional sidewalks from the flagpole to the east side of the road that was added about three summers ago. In addition it was planned that there would be two structures built for shelter from the hot sun or rain, either for interment services or simply for those visiting the cemetery who wish to sit and meditate while they are at the cemetery.

The surveyors will be working out there this week and then the contractor will begin the sidewalk and pads for the structures that will be erected. There will be one structure at the intersection of the tree line and the flagpole isle. A second structure will be built in the middle of the "C" section, just east of the tree line.

The sidewalk will be lined with crepe myrtles, forming a natural arch and additional trees (oaks and burr oaks) will be planted around the new loop to the east and a few will be placed in the midst of each area in the "C" section that is divided by the sidewalk.

These improvements will greatly enhance the serenity of the cemetery and again, I emphasize, it is funded by cemetery funds, not from church funds.

The Cemetery is making a **GIFT** to the church of a matching structure to be located on the west side of the CLC in the space just outside of the CLC kitchen. This came about because the cemetery wanted to do something to show their appreciation to the church for their support over the years.

There had been conversation by church members for a number of years that it would be very helpful to have a covered area close to the CLC kitchen to do BBQ for all of our church events. As you may recall we have teams that do a lot of cooking for our church. In

addition this hexagon shaped structure (20 ft across) would be available to be used for events such as Fall Fair, VBS and other activities that the church has.

Most likely by now you are aware of the vacancy left by Les Williams's resignation. This vacancy has been posted on a number of Christian organization websites and we feel confident we will be receiving resumes soon for this position.

In the mean time, we have invited **Teri Hunt** to serve as an interim to facilitate our Youth program and keep it moving along. Teri has been very involved with the Wednesday evening program as a small group leader and the youth know her and she knows them. We are so delighted that Teri was able to take this interim position. I hope you will express your appreciation to her when you see her.

In the very near future, hopefully by the time you receive this, you will be able to hear a podcast of the Sunday sermon on our website. So if you miss a Sunday, on Monday you will be able to hear the sermon by going to the website and clicking on the podcast. We are trying to keep you connected in every way we can.

Remember also that you can do recurring online giving so that your vacation time away will not let you miss your financial gifts to the church. Click on ACH checks and set those up and if you need assistance let me know.

I hope that you will have a wonderful summer as you enjoy your children who are home from school. If you are traveling on vacation, be safe and have a blessed time to regenerate yourself.

En agape,

Mollie

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

Church Council Report

Summary of action taken at the called meeting of the Palm Valley Lutheran Church Council on Sunday, May 23, 2010.

- Notified by Les Williams of his resignation. The Council was appreciative of his service
- The Church Council approved the expansion of the VBS program from 100 to 150 children
- Approved the creation of an event for the 140th anniversary of Palm Valley Church.
- Approved the creation of a Volunteer Appreciation Day.

CPR/AED Classes

If a cardiac arrest happened to your loved one, a close friend or a congregation member, would you know how to perform life-saving CPR or how to use the AED, which can double a victim's chance of survival? The majority of Americans don't know this info. We will be offering classes to learn this technique in the near future. This will be a two hour class offered here at the church at a cost of \$20 per person. At this time we have time available on June 27th, July 15th, and July 23rd. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex by the office or contact Pat Steger at 254-527-3259.

Volunteer Appreciation Picnic

This event is intended to show appreciation for our wonderful volunteers that help formally and informally throughout the year to make PVLC such a special place to worship God. We want to show gratitude to our many volunteers that donate their time so generously at our church. We will provide a free meal of hotdogs, potato chips, watermelon, tea and lemonade to our volunteers and their families in our beloved Oak Grove from 11 am- 1 pm on Sunday, July 18th.

There is no charge for the meal, we simply need you to sign up on the sign up sheets in the Narthex so that we can properly plan for the meal. If you have volunteered in any capacity during the past 12 months at our church, we want you to attend if possible so that we can show our gratitude to you. We could not ever accomplish the wonderful things that are done throughout the year at PVLC if it were not for YOU and your volunteerism !

Thankfully,

Dwayne Kostiha & Pastor Dave Koppel
Volunteer Appreciation Picnic, Co-Chairs

Women's News **July Calendar**

Tuesday, weekly,	1:00 p.m. Afternoon Quilters
Wednesday, July 14	12:00 p.m. Prayer Group
Friday, July 16	6:30 p.m. Adults' Night Out
Saturday, July 17	4:00 p.m. Circulo de Mujeres Marta
Monday, July 19	6:15 p.m. Sing-Along @ TCC
Thursday, July 24	3:00 p.m. Cluster
Monday, July 26	6:30 p.m. Sassy Seniors

Sassy Seniors

Sassy Seniors has the following schedule for the 4th Monday of the following months subject to changes as needed:

- July - Red Lobster
- August - Springhill in Pflugerville
- September - Mimi's
- October - Saltgrass
- November - Olive Garden
- No Meeting in December
- January—Hunan Lion

The **Christian Education Committee** will not be meeting during the regularly scheduled All Committee Night on Tuesday, July 6th. Instead, we will meet the following night during our Building Egypt work night at 6:30pm in the Parish Hall. We will discuss the results of the Adult Forum on Education that was held in June, and plan for a Wednesday evening Faith Night starting in the fall. Please join us!



Summer Sunday School is in full swing! We meet at 10:00 in the Parish Hall for music and fun then separate into our classes. We are so excited to welcome 4 teachers this summer who are already doing an amazing job! Following is a list of the teachers names and their classrooms. Please remember to pick your child up with their teacher in their classroom when Sunday School is over at 11:00. We look forward to seeing you!

2&3 year olds: Christina Johnson—Centennial Hall, Rm. 13

4yo and Kinder: Erika Wulff—Centennial Hall, Rm. 12

1st/2nd grades: Leslie Smola—1985 Hall, Rm. 25

3rd, 4th & 5th grades: Peter and Hans Curran, 1985 Hall, Rm. 19

VBS 2010 Egypt: Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace will be held August 2nd through 6th from 9am-11:30am. VBS is open to children in the church and community who will be age 4 by September 1st through completed 5th grade. Older children and adults are encouraged to join in the fun and volunteer as helpers. Childcare will be provided for volunteers who have a child younger than 4.

Registration is currently at capacity! We are placing names on a waiting list and hope to be able to add more spots based on volunteers. We need more Family Leaders to do this! Please go online to register as a volunteer at www.palmvalleylutheranchurch.org and follow the VBS links.

Attention VBS Volunteers: Mark your calendar for VBS Training on Sunday, July 11th from 2-4 in the Parish Hall. We will gather together to "gear up" for your journey to Egypt. Plan to come and:

- * Receive your volunteer packet
- * Learn more about the VBS schedule
- * Pick out your costume
- * Meet other volunteers
- * Have fun!
- * Eat ice cream!!

This is a REQUIRED gathering to help make VBS run smoothly. Please plan to come and enjoy this preparation time.

VBS leadership meeting—our final leadership meeting before VBS will be held Monday, July 26th at 6:30 at Morelia Grill in Round Rock.

Building Egypt : We will have 4 more VBS Wednesday work nights from 6-8pm in July. These will be for any and all volunteers who want to help. We will be sewing, building sets, making decorations, etc. We call them 'work nights', but they are a lot of fun, too, and a great way to get to know the other volunteers and youth. Please mark your calendar for: **July 7 – July 14 – July 21 – July 28**

All hands on deck! We will need all the help we can find to decorate for Vacation Bible School immediately following services on Sunday, August 1st. If you can help for an hour or two, or the whole day—come on out and we'll put you to work. Come see the transformation to Ancient Egypt with your own eyes and be a part of this exciting outreach to the kids in our church and community.

Calling all Cooks! Are you wanting to help with VBS but haven't found a place? We will be providing a small breakfast for our VBS workers each morning and need **breakfast casseroles or pastries**. We are having a Family Celebration Thursday evening, Aug. 5th and are in need of **desserts**. Finally, we are serving lunch to the VBS workers on Friday, Aug. 6th and need **salads**. If you can provide any of these food donations, please contact Denise Blomquist at mom-mystruck@austin.rr.com or 468-3346 for details.

Family Fun this summer. Two special family events are planned this summer, please make plans to join us!

Join us Saturday, July 10th at 10am for a splashing good time at the Rock'N River Water Park in Old Settlers Park. The park is open from 10am—8pm. Pack a cooler with lunch and drinks (no glass containers) and hang out with friends while keeping cool in the pool. Everyone is welcome! Admission is \$4.50 for adults and \$3.50 for kids. Contact Cheree Peterson for more information. This will take the place of the Sunday School Social that was planned for July 11th.

The Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus is coming to Austin... Buy your family tickets for Saturday, August 21 at 11:30 am and meet your PVLC friends for some fellowship. We will gather before and then all go to see the event. It will be fun for all ages! [Www.ringling.com](http://www.ringling.com) Contact Pam Dieterich for more information.



HISPANIC

Ministry

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

*Helping Salvadoran poor children to go to school
By Pastor Figueroa*

“We are ambassadors for Christ”

By Pr. Figueroa, July 2010

Do you remember our church mission statement? When was the last or perhaps the first time you knew that as a Lutheran congregation we have a church statement? When was the first time that you read it and try to memorize it? Or perhaps you are wondering why do I need to memorize it in the first place? The answer is because we want to be sure that you and the entire congregation know what the Church main purpose is all about. It is our contention that once you grasp the reasons for the Church to live and exist, you will realize that as member of the body of Christ you are God’s ambassador, you are God’s representative, it is to say, a missionary.

Yes; I know you remember the PV Church statement, but for this article’s sake, let us say it again:”*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.*

Our mission statement affirms that as believers in Christ, we are brothers and sisters. Notice that this is a proclamation, not a question mark not even a proposition we need to agree with. It is a fact. The Gospel, which has been the inspiration and the source of this mission statement do not ask us if we like it or not this affirmation. It clearly says that if we declare Christ as our Savior, then, we are brothers and sisters.

We Hispanics at PV can testify PV Christian faith and commitment since you have graciously accepted us and treated us as your brothers and sisters members of the Church family. We appreciate your kindness and welcoming.

Our mission statement says that we, as people of God, individually and collectively as a Church, we are called to invite people. What does it mean to be called in biblical terms? To be called means to be the recipient of a divine mandate. Divine because it comes from our Divinity, God. Mandate means that it is not something left to our discretion or will, but something we have to do, IF we claim to be Christ followers.

To be called also is a privilege. Means that the Lord has put his eyes on you and me and that, in spite of our sins He still trusts us and takes the risk to put us in charge to do His job on earth. Response to this call should be total and unconditional too. This is what the Gospel

says:” Whoever loves father or mother, son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me”, Matthew 10:37.

We are called to invite people; but not just to come to Church on Sunday, but to know Christ as our Savior and Lord. To come to Church on Sunday is a good habit, but it is not enough. To come to Church on Sunday may help people to become religious, but it is not enough. Nicodemus was a religious man, however, Jesus told him,“Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” John 3: 3.

Perhaps at this time we need to ask ourselves, what kind of people are we supposed to invite? Maybe the people we know better from our own neighborhood, race, nationality, economic status, language etc. However, the Gospel of Matthew says that we are called to invite people of “all nations” and that is a challenge for us and for the Church. But again, this is not something left to our discretion or will, but something we have to do, IF we claim to be Christ followers

Our mission statement calls us to build a community of faith. Notice that there is not a single prerequisite to be part of this community of faith but only to believe in Christ as Savior and Lord. That means that this community is an inclusive community of believers, made of people from different cultural background, race, language, economical status etc.

Finally, our mission statement makes clear that all we do as community of faith sharing the Gospel with others is done only to the glory of God, meaning that we as a Church do not have a mission, but that the mission belongs exclusively to God and we have only the privilege of being instrument used by God to do His job on earth. So, what we do it is not our good idea, but God’s good idea. We are simple servants working to honor His glory.

To be consequent with our mission statement, 26 PV ambassadors are going to El Salvador July 10-17 to share the Gospel and serve the less privileged to keep building the Kingdom of God knowing that we all are brothers and sisters in Christ. You are requested to pray for this mission trip. Please pray for safety and for those that are going to be touched by God’s grace.

Finally and in a personal note: Many thanks for your generous support to my ministry project that helps Salvadoran poor children to go to school. Thanks to your donations we were able to raise \$2,690, which means that 10 more poor children will have the chance to get out of poverty through education.

God is faithful.

Pastor Figueroa



Social Ministry

THE 7 BEST EATING PRACTICES FOR SENIORS

- Eat a variety of foods to get the energy (calories), protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber you need for good health.
- Maintain a healthy weight to reduce your chances of having high blood pressure, heart disease, a stroke, certain cancers, and the most common kind of diabetes.
- Choose a diet low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol to reduce your risk of heart disease and certain types of cancer. Because fat contains more than twice the calories of an equal amount of carbohydrates or protein, a diet low in fat can help you maintain a healthy weight.
- Choose a diet with plenty of vegetables, fruits, and grain products that provide needed vitamins, minerals, fiber, and complex carbohydrates. They are generally lower in fat.
- Use sugars only in moderation. A diet with lots of sugars has too many calories and too few nutrients for most people and can contribute to tooth decay.
- Use salt and other forms of sodium only in moderation to help reduce your risk of high blood pressure.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation. Alcoholic beverages supply calories but little or no nutrients. Drinking alcohol is also the cause of many health problems and accidents and can lead to addiction.

Many researchers have studied the effect of diet and nutrition on health. After reviewing their findings, the Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are convinced that the above eating practices will promote good health and prevent disease.

Special Thanks to these Helpers with the June Echoes:

Johnnie Pecht Ann Grimes
Jean Kammer Delpha Berg
Pat and Herb Wolff

Let's Pull for the Children

During the months of June and July we are collecting pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. Austin's Ronald McDonald House keeps over 600 families together each year while they support their hospitalized children.

Pull tabs are collected for several reasons:

- Studies show that children recover 31% faster when parents are involved in their care.
- Pull tabs are small and convenient to collect. They are on soft drink cans, soup cans, etc.
- They can be combined with other recycling programs. (Save the cans for someone and the tabs for the Ronald McDonald House.)
- The Austin facility collects about \$150 a month from pull tabs that are collected and turned into the facility.

There will be a container outside the Rejoice Service and another outside the Traditional Service. Thanks to Jerry Kirchner and Weldon Burkland for their contributions of over 4 pounds of tabs each. With all the contributions we have collected **32,750 tabs** to date. This is more than half of what we collected all last summer. We will continue collecting tabs through July. There are small Ronald McDonald houses for the Sunday School classes or individuals.

Next Echoes Deadline:

Wednesday, July 20, 2010

Thank You

Dear Palm Valley Family,
Thank you for the cards, prayers and visits during Dave's recent surgery and hospitalization. Special thanks to the pastors for their visits and prayers. We are blessed to know so many caring people.

Sincerely,
Glenda and Dave Rose

Grant and I give our thanks to God for the successful sinus surgery and to our PVLC family for your prayers, phone calls, and cards. We both appreciate your help and thoughtfulness during the surgery and recuperation.

Vivian and Grant Gee

Thank you for your prayers, phone calls, visits and all your expressions of love and concern during the illness and passing of our dear Alice. Special thanks to the pastors and Stephen Ministers for your continuing visits.

Francis Sandberg and family of Alice Sandberg

Thank you to Pastor Koppel and everyone for your thoughts, prayers and other kindness during Marie's recent surgery. She is doing very well and back to her full schedule.

Ken and Marie Bucher

Dear PVLC,
Believe it or not, the house is done! This has been a very quick and smooth process. Renee and I want to thank all of you for your support, prayers, time and food. It all contributed to make this an amazing experience and opportunity to meet new people. We cannot thank you enough!

Christine and Renee Rendon

A BIG thank you to the JAM kids for making nineteen Prayer Journals for Seton Round Rock Hospital. The Chaplain was very happy to receive these and will hand them out to patients.

I just want to say thank you for the scholarship. It means a lot to me that the church that I grew up with has been so generous. The church has made a lifetime believer out of me and I always will know where to turn in times of need.

Thanks again,
Christopher Chappell

Thank you so much for the scholarship. It will help me greatly as I start my life at the University of Nebraska.

Shelby Hohman

Thank you so much for the scholarship. I'm sorry I couldn't make the banquet but I'm sure it was a lovely event. The money will be a big help in furthering my education and I am thankful for every bit of it.

Brad Vachon

I would like to thank you for the wonderful scholarship I have received from you. It helps take some weight off both my parents and I. Again, thank you very much, the church will always be in my prayers.

Your brother in Christ,
Will Thompson

Thank you so much for this scholarship. This money will be used for new books at Texas Lutheran University. Being a part of this congregation has been a wonderful experience. The church will be missed when I move, but I will come back to visit.

With love,
Olivia Cortes

Thank you so much for this scholarship. I have grown up in the church and feel like I will be losing a big part of what I am when I move away to college. I hope to still attend when I can, however, so I will keep hold on all the memories and learning that has occurred there. Even though college is going to be a stressful and busy situation, I know that I will be able to remember what we are all really here for, to serve God. I will be sure to put this scholarship to good use in my further education. Thank you to the entire church for your generosity.

Sincerely,
Greg Cotton

Thank you for selecting me as a recipient of the generous senior scholarships. I am looking forward to utilizing these funds in August as I move in to the University of Texas!

Thanks again,
Amy Johnson

Thank you for all the guidance and help these past 15 years. I will miss seeing everyone on Wednesdays and Sundays but look forward to visiting. Also, thank you very much for the scholarship! It will be used to help pay my expenses at UT Arlington.

Blessings,
Alyssa Owen

July Youth Calendar

Every Sunday: Adult/Sr. High Volleyball 4-6pm
Every Wed.: Youth Group/Bible Study 6-8pm

July 2 - our Ebert Ranch camper returns
July 10-17 - El Salvador Mission Trip
July 18-21 - 1st-3rd graders at Camp Chrysalis
July 24 - Paintball at Texas Paintball

Upcoming Events

Aug. 2-6 - Vacation Bible School
Aug. 29 - Rally Day for Sunday School
Oct. 7 - Make a Difference Tour



We had a fantastic June in Youth Group! The highlights were Ronnie Mueller's message on forgiveness and second chances (June 16th) and Patrick Lawrence's message on baptism (June 23rd). After Ronnie spoke we had a rousing game of Eagles Nest for those who wanted to participate and after Patrick delivered his message, we continued with our water fight in the Oak Grove.

Thank you Ronnie and Patrick for the messages you gave. Thank you, students, parents and volunteers for all the support you provide to our Youth!

Please remember to pray for our students as they attend camps and for our youth who are going to El Salvador. Pray that they have a successful, meaningful and safe trip. I will be attending Camp Chrysalis with our 1st-3rd graders this year and am excited about that opportunity.

August 2-6 is Vacation Bible School and volunteers are still needed. Young people, please consider volunteering your time, you'll be glad you did! Sign up on the PVLC website as a volunteer, click on the "VBS 2010—Register and Find Information Here" link.

On July 24th Paul Vacula is leading an outing to Texas Paintball. You won't want to miss this! The cost is \$10 per person. This covers the purchase of paintballs. We have FREE tickets to get in! Anyone age 10 and over is invited to join us. Sign up by July 21st on the Youth bulletin board in the hallway outside the church office. We will meet at the church at 9:00, arrive at Texas Paintball at 10:00. Gear up and battle it out from 10:30– 12:30, turn in the gear, cool down and enjoy some watermelon and drinks. At 1:00 we will head back to PVLC so parents can pick up at 2:00. There is a WAIVER FORM REQUIRED. No one will be permitted to participate without this form. The form needs to be signed BY A PARENT for anyone under age 18. The form can be found at <http://www.txpb.com/waiver.html>

Be looking for more information about the Make a Difference Tour in Austin on October 7th. You can go to <http://makeadifferencetour.com> to see concert information and I will provide more information as it becomes available.

In His Service,

Teri Hunt
Interim Director of Youth



is coming.....