

# ECHOES

May 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  
Les Williams, Director of Youth and Education



## *Notes From Pastor Dave*

*See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 1 John 3:1*

Every so often I get a chance to be with our preschool kids and I have the opportunity to teach them a little bit about Jesus. They are great kids and, as anyone who works with kids can tell you, anything can happen.

It was Holy Week, and I was explaining how Jesus came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and then I told about the events of the week, the betrayal, and the death of Jesus. Then I told them how Jesus rose on Easter, and what a great day that was.

I didn't think that I was profound, but I did think I had a pretty good story to tell, and I did my best to convey it with a sense of excitement. One little boy just kept his eyes glued to me. He hung on every word.

Let me tell you, that doesn't happen often with preschoolers. Usually their attention span is measured in seconds. Any little distraction and you can lose them.

Finally he raised his hand. I called on him and he had a question. He asked, "Are you real or are you pretend?"

Wow. I have to admit, no one ever had asked me that question before. How do you respond to a question like that? I said, "I'm real, most of the time."

It's a pretty good question, although one we don't ask ourselves often enough. Are we real or pretend? I don't mean in the sense of do we exist or not. I mean in the sense of whether or not our words and actions have integrity. Do they? Do we try to be someone that we are not? Are we real or are we "posers"?

Are you the same person when the lights are on as when the lights are off? Who are you really? How do you define yourself, and your identity? As an American? As a Christian? As a mother or father or sister or brother? As an accountant or architect? As a child of God?

That one may take some thinking. Do you define yourself as one thing one day and another on a different day? I suggest that there is no clearer or greater way of understanding ourselves than as children of God. *See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.* (1 John 3:1) Take a few minutes and think about it

However you choose to answer the question of who you are, do you live it out? Can people tell by the way you act? Can they tell by looking at you? By what you say and do?

Are you real or are you pretend? It's a pretty good question from a preschooler.

"I want to walk as a child of the light, I want to follow Jesus" (Hymn 649, *With One Voice*)

In His grip,

*Pastor*

**Financial Notes**  
**March 2010**



**Operating Budget:**

|                          |                                      |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Jan - March 2010 Income  | \$206,151 (97.03% Projected Income)  |
| Jan - March 2010 Expense | \$186,297 (93.89% Projected Expense) |
| Net income over expense  | \$ 19,852                            |

**W**elcome Martha Miles!

Martha joined us as our new secretary on Vicky's last week, for training. Martha's experience having worked as a church secretary plus having used Publisher and our ACS software previously has cut way down on training time for her. So she is off to a great start. Needless to say it will take her a little while to put names and faces together and to say nothing of trying to piece together the family connections for a congregation this size. Be sure to stop by and say "hello" to Martha.

**W**e continue to be blessed with *enough* income to cover our expenses, though it falls slightly short of projections, and yet it exceeds the first quarter of 2009 by \$12,715. Our total expenses are running \$12,127 under projections as well; however they are also \$12,455 greater than first quarter 2009. But God is faithful!

**H**owever in reviewing our attendance, we are averaging about 15 people less this quarter than last year at this time. Just remember that if we each brought one new friend this next quarter, think how we would grow and how we could help to spread God's word in our community. So bring a friend with you this Sunday.

**W**e have need of volunteers to man the "*Welcome Center*" before and after each of the services. The location is in the narthex as you enter at the portecochere. We plan to have plenty of information packets available at this location for visitors as well as members who are interested in new "connections" in our church. We have volunteers to serve during Sunday school, but if you would be willing to serve at this location a few Sundays a year to welcome our visitors, please contact me here at the office. I would love to share our vision with you.

**Y**ou may have noticed that our family of black furry animals with white striped tails have really taken a liking to our homey environment, and they drop in for a spraying (perfuming) with some frequency. This time our trappers have been unsuccessful in trapping any more of them. If any of you know the secret of keeping them away from the facility, I would love to hear what

you have to say. We have tried numerous approaches but to no avail. They still come "a calling".

**S**oon you will begin to see activity to the north of us at our northeast property corner. This will be a new office complex project quite similar to the one to our east at Joe DiMaggio Dr and HY79. The owner stopped in and made me aware today that he expects this project to be underway this coming month if the weather holds.

**S**ince soil seems to be my thing, I asked the owner for the soil that he has stock piled to spread it to the east of our cemetery to help resolve some drainage issues and to elevate areas that will need to have more soil in the future. So let's get it free now rather than having to pay later for soil to be delivered when we need it.

**T**hank you - to all of our wonderful Volunteers here at Palm Valley. We have hundreds of volunteers here at PVLC, those who serve on committees, who greet, tellers, usher, altar guild, workdays, quilters, Lenten meals, Sunday School teachers, Youth leaders, and on and on. We could not function here if we did not have your wonderful caring spirit, your willingness to step out and get the job done. How fortunate we are to have each and every one of you. You are the spokes that make the wheels turn here. You share your time and talents with us as well as with the community and beyond. **You are the greatest!!**

**I**f you are like me, you are enjoying the wonderful spring colors seen in the flowers that are blooming all around us. The rain and the cool weather seem to be just the right combination for our roses. God's hand is so evident in the beauty of his creation.

May God bless your life each day!

En Agape,

*Mollie*

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

## Church Council

Summary of action taken at the called meeting of the Palm Valley Lutheran Church Council on Sunday, March 28, 2010:

- Recommended that Ronald McDonald pull tab charity be carried out in June and July
- Agreed to host Senior Graduation celebration on May 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm
- Recommended that all concerned committees and interested parties meet to discuss Welcome Center
- Approval of the Resolution for the 2010 Southwestern Texas Synod for the need for congregations to ratify any changes to church ministry policy.

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## Senior Banquet

For years Palm Valley Church Council has honored it's graduating High School Seniors with a banquet in May. This year the banquet will be May 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:00pm in the Parish Hall. The Seniors as well as their families are invited to this special event. Seniors please mark your calendar, you do not want to miss this fun event.

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***Next Echoes Deadline:***

***Thursday May 20, 2010***

## Lutheran World Relief Update

Because of generous hearts and countless volunteer hours, we've been able to supply Lutheran World Relief with many quilts and kits for relief work.

This year Palm Valley Lutheran Church contributed 143 quilts, 178 school kits, 11 sewing kits, 283 health kits, and an additional 266 bars of soap. These items were taken to a gathering spot in Austin, then driven to Seguin and loaded into 18-wheelers for the trip to a distribution warehouse in Maryland. From there, they will be distributed to sites anywhere in the world that have need.

This has been a particularly hard year as far as disasters are concerned - from earthquakes in Haiti, China, and Chile to war-torn and famine-stricken countries in Africa. Your contributions of time, talents, and money will be put to good use and help minister to those less fortunate and in need of comfort.

For more information on LWR, and current news of their efforts worldwide, check out the website [www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org).

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## 4th Grader Learns Ten Commandments

Congratulations to Shalyn Mobley, a 4th Grader who has learned the Ten Commandments by heart. Her teacher is Chris Orton. May God bless her as she strives to follow these commandments.

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## Preschool News

May marks the end of the school year for our preschoolers. Before we close out the year we'll have fun with Hawaiian day and Splash day as we learn about the beach and the ocean. As we say good-bye to all those going on to kindergarten, we are excited to meet new friends in September!

We currently have openings in our program for the 2010 - 2011 school year. Please tell your friends and neighbors! Preschool information can be found on our website at [www.palmvalleypreschool.org](http://www.palmvalleypreschool.org) or by emailing us at [abc123@palmvalleypreschool.org](mailto:abc123@palmvalleypreschool.org). You can always reach us at (512)388-5054.

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**VBS 2010:** Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace will be held August 2-6<sup>th</sup> from 9am-11:30am. Registration for participants will start in early June. VBS is open to children in the church and community who are age 4 (by 9/1/2010) through completed 5<sup>th</sup> 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. Please contact Cheree Peterson for more information.

The VBS leadership team is busy planning another super fun VBS for 2010 and we would love to have you join us! Key positions that remain to be filled are a Decorations & Costumes Director. We have lots of willing volunteers to help in these areas, we just need someone with a creative or artistic flair to "circle the wagons" for us and point us in the right direction. If you are interested in finding out more about volunteering, please contact VBS Co-Chairs, Cheree Peterson or Pam Dieterich.. **Our next leadership meeting will be on Monday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at Chuy's in Round Rock at 7pm.**

**B**uilding Egypt : We will have six VBS Wednesday work nights from 6-8pm leading up to VBS week. 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 ...**June 23 – June 30 – July 7 – July 14 – July 21 – July 28**

**A**dults – are you looking for a way to connect, meet new friends, and dive into the Bible? Check out the Adult Opportunities bulletin board in the hallway outside the church office for a recently updated list of Bible studies for you to join!

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**M**ay SS Social – There will be **no** May Sunday School Social as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday falls on Mother's Day. Instead, we will combine with the Teacher Appreciation Brunch the following Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>.

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**T**eacher Appreciation Brunch – The Christian Education committee would like to wind down the school year with a Teacher Appreciation Brunch during the Sunday School Hour on Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup> in the CLC. Come show your appreciation for all the hard working volunteers who serve as Sunday School teachers for the school year. This will take place during the Sunday School hour, so there will be no Sunday School classes this day. We will begin the CLC with a short opening immediately following the 9am service (around 10am) and finish with a brunch. Please bring a brunch item to share. Drinks will be provided.

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**S**ummer Sunday School – Have you ever thought about teaching Sunday School, but weren't ready to make a long term commitment? Have you ever wanted to grow in your own faith, by sharing with children? Do you secretly miss the arts and crafts you got to make when you were a kid in Sunday School? Have you ever wanted to thank our hard working teachers, but weren't quite sure how to do it? Well, have we got the perfect job for you! We are currently recruiting Summer Sunday School teachers in order to give some of our permanent teachers a short break. It is a short term commitment (June-August), a co-teaching program that allows it to be flexible for your schedule, you won't believe how much it pays and the benefits are astronomical! If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Kim Kubala, Sunday School Coordinator. Summer Sunday school will start the first Sunday in June and go through August.

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**JAM** is in full swing and we are having a rockin' good time! Kindergarteners through 5<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to JAM (Jesus & Me) with us! We will meet on Wednesday nights from 6-7:15pm in the Parish Hall for Music, Games, Fellowship and Fun – all while learning more about Jesus. May will be the last month of JAM before we break for the summer. For more information, contact Leah Murphy.



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

**Who is Monsignor Oscar Romero?  
By Pastor Figueroa**

**Ministry**

On March 24 during our Wednesday Lent worship I wore a stole with a picture of Salvadoran Roman Catholic Bishop Oscar Romero who was killed on March 24, 1980, precisely 30 years ago. Since then, some people have asked me about this historical figure who gave his life preaching the Gospel in a poor country dominated by 14 families that owned most of the land while the majority of people were living in severe poverty. This unjust status was so extreme that people got organized and started a guerilla war to confront the government. Bishop Romero was preaching in the midst of a civil war that left 80,000 people dead in ten years. So, to give you a glimpse of who this charismatic figure was and what it means today for the Salvadoran people, I have extracted a brief Bishop Romero biography written by Renny Golden and published by US Catholics.

"In 1980, in the midst of a civil war, Archbishop Oscar Romero promised history that life, not death, would have the last word. "I do not believe in death without resurrection," he said. "If they kill me, I will be resurrected in the Salvadoran people."

Oscar Romero gave his last homily on March 24th. Moments before a sharpshooter felled him, reflecting on scripture, he said, "One must not love oneself so much, as to avoid getting involved in the risks of life that history demands of us, and those that fend off danger will lose their lives." The homily, however, that sealed his fate took place the day before when he took the terrifying step of publicly confronting the military.

Romero begged for international intervention. He was alone. The people were alone. In 1980 the war claimed the lives of 3,000 per month, with cadavers clogging the streams, and tortured bodies thrown in garbage dumps and the streets of the capitol weekly. With one exception, all the Salvadoran bishops turned their backs on him, going so far as to send a secret document to Rome reporting him, accusing him of being "politicized" and of seeking popularity. Unlike them, Romero had refused to ever attend a government function until the repression of the people was stopped. He kept that promise winning him the enmity of the government and military, and an astonishing love of the poor majority. Romero was a surprise in history. The poor never expected him to take their side and the elites of church and state felt betrayed. He was a compromise candidate elected to head the bishop's episcopacy by conservative fellow bishops. He

was predictable, an orthodox, pious bookworm who was known to criticize the progressive liberation theology clergy so aligned with the impoverished farmers seeking land reform. But an event would take place within three weeks of his election that would transform the ascetic and timid Romero.

The new archbishop's first priest, Rutilio Grande, was ambushed and killed along with two parishioners. Grande was a target because he defended the peasant's rights to organize farm cooperatives. He said that the dogs of the big landowners ate better food than the peasants children whose fathers worked their fields.

The night Romero drove out of the capitol to Paisnal to view Grande's body and the old man and seven year old who were killed with him, marked his change. In a packed country church Romero encountered the silent endurance of peasants who were facing rising terror. Their eyes asked the question only he could answer: Will you stand with us as Rutilio did? Romero's "yes" was in deeds. The peasants had asked for a good shepherd and that night they received one. Romero's great helplessness was that he could not stop the violence. Within the next year some 200 catechists and farmers who watched him walk into that country church were killed. Over 75,00 Salvadorans would be killed, one million would flee the country, another million left homeless, constantly on the run from the army—and this in a country of only 5.5 million.

On March 23 Romero walked into the fire. He openly challenged an army of peasants, whose high command feared and hated his reputation. Ending a long homily broadcast throughout the country, his voice rose to breaking, "Brothers, you are from the same people; you kill your fellow peasant . . . No soldier is obliged to obey an order that is contrary to the will of God . . ." There was thunderous applause; he was inviting the army to mutiny. Then his voice burst, "In the name of God then, in the name of this suffering people I ask you, I beg you, I command you in the name of God: stop the repression." Days before his murder he told a reporter, "You can tell the people that if they succeed in killing me, that I forgive and bless those who do it. Hopefully, they will realize they are wasting their time. A bishop will die, but the church of God, which is the people, will never perish".

Now after a peace agreement was signed in 1998 there is a democratic elected President in El Salvador and Congress members belong to different political parties. As part of PV youth mission trip to ES we plan to visit the Bishop Romero tomb and the small chapel where he was killed.



## **Social Ministry**

### **“Natural” Is Not Always Safe**

Many people take herbal remedies. Herbal remedies – whether taken as pills, powders or teas – help many people, but some people are actually harmed by them.

Many people think that herbal remedies are risk free because they are “natural.” They are wrong! Poison ivy and poisonous mushrooms are also natural, but they are not good for you!

The reason so many people find herbal preparations helpful is that they have medicinal effects just like other medicines prescribed by the doctor or purchased over the counter. And just like other medications, they can have side effects, cause reactions, and have dangerous interactions with other medications.

If you take herbal remedies, you should take several precautions to make sure it is safe for you to take these remedies:

1. Be sure your doctor knows about all the medicines and remedies you take. Whenever your doctor prescribes a new medication for you, show the doctor the list of medicines and remedies you take regularly and “as needed.” Be sure to include all herbal preparations on this list.
2. Use one pharmacy for all your medications. Tell the pharmacist about the herbals you take. Ask the pharmacist to include these herbal remedies on your Drug Profile so that the pharmacy computer can check for drug interactions with the herbal remedies you take.
3. Find out everything you can about the herbal remedies you take. Find out if there are any side effects, adverse reactions, drug interactions, or precautions you should take when using the herbal remedy. Check with a librarian, the Internet, or your pharmacist for this information.

### **“Natural” no Siempre es Seguro**

Mucha gente usa medicamentos herbarios. Los remedios de yerbas – ya sea tomados como píldoras, polvo o té – ayudan a mucha gente, pero en realidad dañan a algunas personas.

Mucha gente piensa que los medicamentos herbarios no tienen riesgo ya que son “naturals.” ¡pero no son Buenos para usted!

La razón por la que mucha gente encuentra que las preparaciones de yerbas son útiles es porque tienen efectos medicinales como las medicinas prescritas por su doctor o compradas sin receta. Y tal como otros medicamentos, pueden tener efectos secundarios, causar reacciones y tener peligrosas interacciones con otras medicinas.

Si usa medicamentos herbarios, debe tomar varias precauciones para asegurarse de que puede usar estos remedios sin peligro:

1. Asegúrese que su doctor conozca todas las medicinas que está tomando. Cuando su doctor le prescribe un nuevo medicamento, muéstrela la lista de medicinas y remedios que toma regularmente y “cuando lo necesita”. Asegúrese de incluir todas las preparaciones de yerbas en esta lista.
2. Use una farmacia para todos sus medicamentos. Dígale al farmacéutico que incluya estos remedios herbarios en su Lista de Medicamentos para que la computadora de la farmacia pueda chequear interacciones de las medicinas con los remedios herbarios que usted está tomando.
3. Averigüe todo lo que pueda acerca de los remedios herbarios que toma. Averigüe si producen efectos secundarios, reacciones adversas, interacciones con medicinas o precauciones que debe tomar al usar estos remedios de herbarios. Cheque esta información en la biblioteca, an Internet o con su farmacéutico.

# Thank You

**From the Stegers:**

Thank you for all the prayers, cards, and visits from the Pastors and congregation members during Les' surgery and recovery. As we know, Prayer is Powerful!

Pat and Les Steger

**From the family of Marvin Dietz:**

We offer our heartfelt thanks for your prayers, cards, phone calls, meals, and hugs during this difficult time. Special thanks to Pastor Koppel and Pastor Tietz for your visits, your listening ears, your comforting words, your prayers, your support, and your guidance. We also thank all those who helped with the reception after the funeral. God has truly blessed us with our faith, family, friends, and lots of wonderful memories.

**From the Grimes Family:**

I am humbled and overwhelmed with the love and support I have received from my church family during L.A.'s illness and his passing. I want to thank Pastor Tietz and Pastor Koppel for their visits and support. Thank all of you for your many prayers, cards, meals, hugs and phone calls. All of this has meant so very much to me. Palm Valley has so many caring people. God bless each of you,

Ann Grimes and Family

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**Special Thanks to these Helpers with the April Echoes**

- Johnnie Pecht      Delpha Berg
- Pat Wolff          Herb Wolff
- Sarah Williams

**Women's News  
May Calendar**

|                   |                                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Tuesday, weekly,  | 1:00 p.m. Afternoon Quilters          |
| Wednesday, May 12 | 12:00 p.m. Noon Prayer Group          |
| Saturday, May 15  | 4:00 p.m. Circulo de Mujeres<br>Marta |
| Monday, May 17    | 6:15 p.m. Sing-Along @ TCC            |
| Tuesday, May 18   | 10:00 a.m. Esther Circle              |
| Thursday, May 20  | 6:30 p.m. Rebecca Circle              |
| Friday, May 21    | 6:30 p.m. Adults' Night Out           |
| Monday, May 24    | 6:30 p.m. Sassy Seniors               |
| Thursday, May 27  | 3:00 p.m. Cluster                     |

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**Thrivent Night at Dell Diamond**

Please keep June 21 open to be with us at Dell Diamond. Ticket prices will be reduced for Thrivent members. Non alcohol drinks and food prices will also be reduced.

Note that our own choir director, Marvin Goad, will lead the national anthem! For tickets to see the Round Rock Express play the Omaha Royals, please pick up an order form on the Bulletin Board in the Narthex and return the forms with payment to Oliver Girvin. **Order deadline is June 9th.**





## Youth Group

**This** semester at youth group has been a great semester. We have had some of the largest crowds that we have ever had. We have studied different Bible characters such as Daniel and Jonah and are currently studying the book of James.

The fun that happens on Wednesday nights is *not* going to stop for the summer, we will continue to have youth group. The only difference is that dinner will not be served during the summer.

If your student starts to complain about being bored then send them to youth group!

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### May Youth Calendar

|  |               |
|--|---------------|
| Every Sunday: Adult/Sr. High Volleyball          | 4:00—6:00 pm  |
| Every Wednesday:                                 |               |
| Youth Bible Study                                | 6:00—8:00 pm  |
| JAM (K—5th graders)                              | 6:00—7:15 pm  |
| May 16 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade Confirmation Class | 12:30—2:30 pm |
| May 23 Confirmation Sunday                       | 9:00 & 11:15  |

### Letter from Les

**On** Wednesday nights we study the Bible. A couple of weeks ago we started to study the book of James. In the first twelve verses of James one can see that Christians are going through trials. James 1:2 says, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds." That is an interesting approach to trials. James says we must *count it as joy* or rejoice when trials come our way. Isn't our approach to complain or run from trials? We normally despise anything that is tough. But James says we must *count it as joy*. I believe the reason for having joy in the midst of trials is that there is a blessing that comes from the trial that we would not experience apart from the suffering. This is seen in James 1:12 which says, "Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial..." As it is necessary for athletes to go through rigorous training to hopefully win the game it is also necessary for Christians to go through suffering or trials at times. And remember, when we go through a trial, count it a joy!

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### Confirmation Sunday

**On** Sunday May 23, thirteen students will be confirmed at the 9am or 11:15am service. These students are Shawn Stone, Adam Ramirez, Jack Johnson, Joey Cuff, Luke Cotton, Kellan Berran, Hans Curran, Bobby Hopp, Matthew Wiese, Jewell Williams, Holly Meyer, Courtney Griffin and Dani Hunt.

It has been a fun year and a blessing being able to work with these thirteen young men and women. Each class was filled with teaching and discussion that has helped deepen each students faith. Be sure to congratulate these students on being confirmed in their faith.

### El Salvador Mission 2010 Update

**As** this is written, our youth trip to El Salvador is only 79 days away. We have a chance to work with some incredible Salvadoran Christians who labor for Christ under some circumstances American Christians seldom see. Those Salvadorans are busy preparing for our visit. Their excitement is seen in every e-mail we exchange.

Our students have responded with equal excitement. Our first trip two years ago consisted of 8 students and 4 adults. Last year, we had 14 students and 7 adults. This year, we have reached our absolute capacity with 20 students and 7 adults signed up!

But, this trip isn't just a "youth trip." It is a chance for our entire congregation to reach out to encourage our fellow Christians and to teach 125+ Salvadoran children about the love of Jesus Christ. We "teach" with songs, stories, Bible verses, crafts and games. But we also teach with hugs, smiles and living out the Gospel rather than just telling about it. This is a Palm Valley mission we can all be excited about.

If you picked up a prayer sheet when we distributed them in February, please keep praying for us. If you haven't been praying for us, please consider starting now. If you have a blue piggy bank, please keep feeding it your coins. If you are led to make a financial contribution beyond the piggy bank, that also is appreciated and needed. On Sunday, May 2nd, we will begin receiving the piggy banks back at church.

Two years ago there was a Lutheran pastor and a home Bible study in the village of Quezaltepeque, El Salvador. In a short period of time, the Bible study has grown into a thriving Lutheran congregation with a church building, youth group, and social ministries that show the love of Christ to some desperately poor people. God has given our congregation a wonderful opportunity to be part of