

ECHOES

September 2011

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*

“Babies, Friends, and looking in the mirror...”

You can see the speck in your friend's eye, but you don't notice the log in your own eye. How can you say, "My friend, let me take the speck out of your eye," when you don't see the log in your own eye? You're nothing but show-offs! First, take the log out of your own eye. Then you can see how to take the speck out of your friend's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)

Dear Friends,

I just had a wonderful time. I had just baptized a baby and was spending a little time with his mom and dad and extended family at their home. He is a great little guy, a happy baby. Now since my kids are all older – old enough to not be babies, but not old enough to be having babies of their own – I haven't had the chance to hold a baby for quite a while. I don't mean hold a baby for a minute, or until the baby cries and then quickly hand him back. I mean hold a baby for a while.

So I was really enjoying my time with little Ethan while his mom and dad were getting something to eat. He seemed to enjoy being held up against my shoulder – you know, in typical burping position. And I realized that I didn't have a burp cloth between him and my suit. It made me remember back to the days when I stopped buying nice clothes for a while because I knew that they would just get covered with spit-up anyway. (If you're a parent, you understand what I mean. If you're not, you'll just think that it is gross.) Oh well, that's why we have dry cleaners.

It reminded me of a church council meeting that I went to many years ago. This particular church tended to have marathon council meetings, often beginning at 7:00 p.m. and lasting until midnight. We had one member who

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
Anna Froehlich, Director of Youth

would try to get his own way by dragging things on and on and finally everybody else would give in just so they could finally go home.

What made this particular meeting so bad wasn't just the fact that this one guy kept going on and on and on, it was the fact that the council member next to me had one serious case of body odor.

You know what I mean – he didn't just seem a little sweaty, he smelled. I thought, "I can't be the only one who notices this...I hope he isn't sick. He smells like he's been out working in the hot sun and hasn't taken a shower for a week."

Do you say anything? Do you do anything? The smell was starting to make me feel nauseous. As the meeting droned on, all I could think of was, "I have to get out of here. I am going to be sick if I have to stay here and smell this odor."

Maybe I am particularly sensitive. Maybe I ate something that didn't sit right. But I couldn't believe this odor. It was just that bad.

Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, the meeting ended. I got up and took off my sport coat.

Guess what I found. Baby spit up all over my shoulder.

The horrific smell? It was ME!!!!

That baby spit-up had been ripening on my shoulder for at least 5 hours. I had no idea! Nobody told me that it was there. I was the one stinking up the place!

AAAAaarrggghhh.

I don't know what was worse, realizing that I was the stinky one, or the fact that I was so ready to blame someone else.

In so much of our lives, when things aren't going right, when there is a problem, or when things just stink, the first thing we do is blame it on someone else.

In fact, we are often quicker to fix the blame than we are to fix the problem.

And the last place we look is ourselves.

A wise person once pointed out that when we point our finger at someone else, our other fingers are pointing back at us.



Church Operating Budget:			
January - July 2011 Income	\$ 458,754	(100.9%)	Projected Income for 7 mos.)
January - July 2011 Expense	\$ 412,568	(96.5%)	Projected Expense for 7 mos.)
Net	\$ 46,186		

We were so blessed to have a good “HOT” July!!!

Temperatures soared for another month at 100+ degrees. Aren't "positive spins" placed on everything we hear these days? The only positive thing I have been able to see as a result of these temperatures is that for the first time in ten years, we have not had webworms shrouding our pecan trees.

But then the temperature was not the only thing that soared, so did our offerings, which is quite unusual for July. Traditionally the months of July, August and September are more likely than not, negative cash flow months.

Obviously having five Sundays in July helped a great deal. But hopefully it was more than just five Sundays that made the difference. Hopefully, this is as a result of people's hearts being touched by God's love.

Looking back over our past ten years financials, this is only the second time we have had a net income over expense for the month of July that exceeded \$5,000. Of the past ten years, seven of them have been negative cash flow for July. But this July God blessed us with a net income over expense of over \$10,000. We have so much to be thankful for here at Palm Valley, and this is only one of those many blessings he showers upon us.

Cemetery pricing increase

If you have not purchased a cemetery lot and you think you may want one in the future, I would encourage you to call me and make an appointment to come in and purchase your lot(s) soon.

Cemetery pricing will increase January 1, 2012, in an attempt to keep pace with the rising cost of maintenance. Pricing for members will increase from \$500 to \$750 and non-member pricing will increase from \$2,000 to \$3,000. Our pricing will still remain a \$1000 less than the least costly at some other cemeteries in our area.

Another of our Eagle Scout candidates has finished his project. Adam Ramirez elected to refurbish the old baseball field this summer to make it more appealing for

groups to use. Thank you Adam (and your team of scouts) for your hard work in this hot 100 degree weather.

Our work projects are under way and most likely you have noticed the seven new glass doors that have been installed in the old narthex at the porte-cochere as well as those leading out to the Cemetery. This project has certainly given this space a much more open and airy feel than previously it had. We have received many positive comments from our members

We anticipate the installation of windows will begin in the next ten days and possibly the majority of them will all be installed by the time you read the Echoes. We hope to have that project completed by the first week of September.

When you walk into the sanctuary now you will certainly notice what an improvement has been made there. With the refurbishing of the old vestibule (old old narthex) the wood just comes to life where it had been buried under numerous coats of paint and stain. All of the wood was striped, and re-stained all one color. It previously wore several shades of brown. It has made an incredible improvement in the appearance of this space.

We anticipate that the refinishing of the wooden floors in the sanctuary will begin on August 29th and be concluded by the 9th of September. Half of the pews will be relocated into the Parish Hall each week during this process. This then allows room for them to work on that half of the sanctuary floor. Pews will be replaced each Friday for the services on Sunday. Please "*forgive our dust*" during these projects.

It has certainly been a very busy summer for us here this year with the various projects going on. Thank you for your patience during this time for any inconvenience the projects may have caused.

En agape,

Mollie

Mollie DeVries, C.C.A.
Executive Administrator

Church Council Report

Summary of action taken at the regular meeting of the Palm Valley Lutheran Church Council on Wednesday, August 17, 2011:

- Council approved the Cemetery Committee's recommendation to increase the cost of a cemetery site from \$500 to \$750 for members and from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for non-members. The price changes will take effect starting January 1, 2012.
- Council reviewed the priorities resulting from the Strategic Planning meeting on August 13. The council has since shared the priorities with the congregation at a public forum on August 21, and will post the information in the members' section of the web site. The next steps in the strategic planning process will be to establish measurable goals and to work with the committees on identifying those goals.

Respectfully submitted,

Manny Castro, Council Secretary

(cont. from page 1—

“Babies, Friends, and looking in the mirror...”

Instead of blaming someone or something else when we have a problem, let's first look at ourselves, and what we are contributing to the problem.

I can't speak for you, but I figure that, conservatively, I am responsible for at least 50% of the problems I encounter in my daily life. If I could cut out the problems that I make myself, I could cut more than half of my problems.

But it starts with me.

Let's not judge until we know the facts. And let's start by looking at ourselves. If you are wrong, apologize. If you have hurt anyone, do what you can to make it right. And don't worry about what somebody else is doing, until you are sure that you lead a perfect life.

Like me, you could stink and not even know it.

And, yes, every once in a while, look in the mirror. And have your coat cleaned.

In the grip of an incredibly forgiving God,

Poster

WOMEN

News and Events

of Palm Valley Lutheran Church

September Calendar

Tuesday, weekly	1:00 p.m. Afternoon Quilters
Wed., Sept. 14	12:00 p.m. Prayer Group
Thurs., Sept. 15	2:00 p.m. Rebecca Circle
Thurs., Sept. 15	6:00 p.m. Adults' Night Out
Sat., Sept. 17	4:00 p.m. Circulo de Mujeres Marta
Mon., Sept. 19	5:45 p.m. Sing-Along @ TCC
Tues., Sept. 20	10:00 a.m. Esther Circle
Thurs., Sept. 22	3:00 p.m. Cluster
Mon., Sept. 26	6:30 p.m. Sassy Seniors

WOMEN'S FALL RETREAT **October 14-16, 2011**



Ladies – How often do you have time to sit and be still and reflect on your spiritual life? This is what our Women's Retreats are all about. The retreats give us time to enjoy nature, visit with friends, make new friends, discuss our faith and of course have a great time getting to know each other better.

Come join your Sisters-In-Christ at the Wallin Ranch located west of Burnet, Texas for a weekend (Friday, October 14 through Sunday, October 16) of spiritual growth and fun. We have small/whole group discussions, worship, game time, mealtime and even a little alone time to reflect on our spiritual growth. Our overall mission is to bring spiritual sisters together with a few surprises thrown in.

The price for the full weekend is \$30 and the price for Friday/Saturday or Saturday/Sunday is \$20 and the price for Saturday is only \$10. We will meet at the Ranch Friday night for dinner. You will receive after the deadline date, October 9, a packing list with directions and other items.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Sunday, October 9, 2011.

Take a moment, fill out the registration form available on our website and on the bulletin board by the Palm Room, or ask Joy Kovar or Peggy Felfe, and come join your sisters.

If you have any questions ask any of the ladies who have attended one of our Women's Retreats.



Ministry

Who Is My Neighbor?

By Pastor Figueroa

According to the 2010 Census Bureau figures, “Hispanics accounted for more than half of the US population increase over the last decade, exceeding estimates in most states as they crossed a new census milestone: 50 million or 1 in 6 Americans. Asians also grew by 43 percent over the last decade. They were tied with Hispanics as the fastest growing demographic group. For the first time Asians also had a larger numeric gain than African-Americans, who remained the second largest minority group at 37.7 million.” Locally, the April-May community newspaper “Impact”, said, “while the explosive growth of the Hispanic population in and around Williamson County has grabbed most of the headlines, minority population of various races and ethnicities have been quietly surging in Round Rock. The result has been a transformation of communities, schools, and businesses from what has been a primarily white region into one that is increasingly diverse”. According to the last Census figures, the Hispanic population in Round Rock went from about 22 % to 29 %, the Asian population increased from 2.9 % to 5.9 % and the percent of Round Rock residents who identify themselves as Black or African American increased from 7.7 % to 9.8 %. Some locals believe that, Round Rock it is kind of its own little melting pot because we have so much culture and so much diversity and opportunity. So, I believe that the answer to the initial question, “Who is my neighbor?” is that for the most part our neighbor at PV is Anglo (white), Hispanic, African American and Asian. This new demographic reality places a wonderful challenge in terms of Evangelism to our PV congregation.

To face present and future challenges, PV Church Council invited to a special meeting August 13th in which Pr. Koppel revealed his vision and strategic plan for our congregation for the coming years that includes: **GROW IN FAITH (DISCIPLESHIP)**: *Developing the habits of a mature faith; teaching, training, and helping people to become more like Christ.* **REACH OUR COMMUNITY (EVANGELISM)**: *Learning to share our faith - sharing the good news, making Christ known.* **AWE-INSPIRING WORSHIP**: *Celebrating God's presence in diverse ways which meet the needs of our congregation and community. Worshiping weekly.* **CONNECT IN SMALL GROUPS (FELLOWSHIP)**: *Groups for growth, support, and accountability. Enhancing and encouraging involvement, support and initiative in a welcoming, comfortable, inclusive atmosphere.* **EXCEPTIONAL SERVING (MINISTRY)**: *Identifying our gifts and using*

them to serve; demonstrating God's love to others.” After describing the 5 areas of the strategic plan that goes with the acronym of **GRACE**, we were invited to think big, to dream about the future in these 5 areas.

Then we were asked how to measure the accomplishment of these big dreams, and later, to list PV strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats and imperatives to fulfill our plan. So, wouldn't it be nice if we could measure in 5 or 10 years how much PV has increased its membership, not only in terms of Hispanics, but also in terms of Anglos, African Americans and Asians? Knowing we face an Outreach challenge I would like to start by giving you an opportunity to get the necessary inspiration so you will be able to do your part in this PV dream of outreaching a diverse neighborhood. With this in mind, I have included an invitation from the Synod office to attend a multicultural gathering in San Antonio September 23-24.

ELCA Glocal Mission Gathering Coming to our Synod in September!

Want to hear about an exciting opportunity?! Our Southwestern TX Synod of the ELCA was chosen to host 1 of 12 Glocal Mission Gatherings this year which is going to be held at Zion Lutheran Church in San Antonio September 23-24 – so mark your calendars now. You're not going to want to miss it!!!! You heard correctly, it's a GLOCAL Mission Gathering – what does that mean? We live in an era today with internet, skype, air travel and more which makes it increasingly easier for the local and global communities to interweave with one another. The word “Glocal” reflects the Global-Local world in which we live. Our Synod is a perfect picture of what it means to be a Glocal Community since we partner in mission and ministry with our brothers and sisters in Mexico. Here, Global and Local collide creating the beautifully rich culture we have – we are a Glocal community! This is even more reason to come to the Glocal Mission Event! At this event, you will hear amazing music truly reflecting our Glocal community led by professional musicians from all around the world. You will also hear motivating speakers. Topics at this event include: Mission as Accompaniment, Culture, Migration, Lutheran Immigration Refugee Service (LIRS), Short-Term Mission Trips, Growing a Missional Congregation, but also there are topics on Stewardship, Cross-Generational Ministry, Worship and Music, and more. This event is for ALL leaders, including youth age 15 and older, in every area of ministry in our church in order to teach mission as a “culture” within our church. Spanish translation is available upon request. Cost is only \$35 which includes your meals. Register NOW online at www.zionsa.org/glocal.

Thank You

To the PVLC Family,

I went to the surgical center to have a simple procedure. The surgery went fine but when it was over things didn't go well and I ended up on a ventilator for 4 weeks (2 weeks awake). They diagnosed me with Respiratory Distress (ARDS).

No one really knows why it happened, and I wouldn't want to go through it again; but lots of nice things happened as a result. First, every doctor, nurse, and hospital employee was extremely kind. Second, I got to know the Pastors a little bit better and they were a great comfort to my family and me, after I was awake and alert. Third, I found out things about my children that I didn't know before and now I feel even closer to them! Fourth, Scott and I said our vows when we got married, "in sickness and in health," but I'm always the sick one and he is always at my side. Scott says that is one thing God wants him to do, take care of me. Many of the nurses at the hospital said they wish they could find a man just like Scott.

Finally, when I woke up and found myself in this predicament, God was there too. God wanted me to know that he's always there when I need him, he does hear my prayers, and he does answer them! So, I want to thank you for your prayers, cards, gifts, visits and good wishes. They were God's answers to my family's prayers.

Take care,

Christine Nicolet

Greetings to my dear Palm Valley Church family for your love and prayers, card and phone calls. I appreciate it more than words can express. I love you and appreciate you. Lord willing, I'll see you all the latter part of October.

Delpha Berg

Thank you to everyone for all the prayers, phone calls, and cards concerning my surgery and recuperation. I felt God's healing through all of you. He has blessed me so much in this loving church family.

Greta Riordan

Thanks to all of our wonderful church family for all the kindness, love and support shown to Neal and me during and since Bob's passing. Thanks to Pastors Koppel, Tietz, Haverlah and Nestler for their visits. We could not have gotten through this difficult time without you.

God's Blessings To All,
Dot and Neal Foxworth

Sassy Seniors

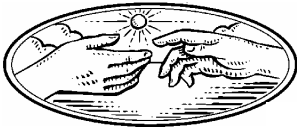
Sassy Seniors has the following schedule for the 4th Monday of the following months subject to changes as needed:

September 26	Mimi's, RR
October 24	Saltgrass, RR
November 28	Olive Garden, RR
December	NO Meeting

Special Thanks to these Helpers with the September Echoes:

Johnnie Pecht *Ann Grimes*
Jean Kammer *Herb & Pat Wolff*
Marion Fowler

**Next Echoes Deadline:
Thursday, October 20, 2011**



Social Ministry

New Ministry Opportunity: The Backpack Project

Palm Valley has a wonderful opportunity to participate in an outreach project in the Round Rock Community. It is the Backpack Project, spearheaded by the SonRise Ministry at First United Methodist Church and supported by other churches in the city. The Project will provide food for the weekends to needy children in elementary schools in the Round Rock School District.

There are 13 elementary schools in the RRISD that have a high percentage of students on free or reduced cost meals. For some of these children the only meals they receive are breakfast and lunch at school Monday through Friday. The parents have jobs, but after paying rent and utilities, typically do not have extra money for food. They don't qualify for food stamps or other assistance programs.

Students in the Project will be referred by school staff including teachers, counselors, and nurses. Not everyone who receives the free or reduced cost meals will qualify for the backpack food. The Project expects to provide 72,000 pounds of food in the next school year.

Backpacks will be filled by volunteers for distribution on Fridays. They will receive individual serving items such as mac and cheese, ramen noodles, Chef Boyardee, fruit cups, and juice boxes, just to name a few.

Donations of non perishable food, money to buy food, and volunteers to help pack, manage and hand out backpacks will be needed.

If you would be interested in helping with the Backpack Project please check it out at the Ministry Fair on August 28 or contact Jill Lampi.

Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share

This year's Stewardship program begins on September 11th, and continues through October 2nd. Entitled *Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share*, this program encourages each of us to acknowledge God's many gifts, to express our thankfulness, and to joyfully and generously share our time, our talents, and our financial resources, in grateful response to His love. As part of *Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share*, we are very excited to have various members of our congregation sharing their own stories of faith with us. These personal accounts promise to be an inspiring and meaningful addition to our program.

Later this month, each household will receive a packet in the mail, containing an introductory letter and pledge card. Completed pledge cards should be returned on Commitment Sunday, **October 2nd**. Please open your hearts, prayerfully consider your response, and make the commitment to give generously back to the One who has given us so much. God is good!

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back." ~ Luke 6: 38

The Stewardship Committee

Small Group News!

"40 Days of Community – Better Together" is coming this fall! We'll begin this churchwide campaign in October, focusing on how our purposes are fulfilled together, in community. Our Pastors will preach on the topic each week and are again encouraging everyone in the congregation to join a six-week, small group study. **Leaders needed!** If you are interested in leading a small group, either at the church or in your home, please contact Susan Thompson at smallgroups@pvlc.org. **Sign up for small groups will begin Sunday, September 4!**



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

Welcome to our brand new Sunday school year which began with Rally Day on August 28th!

Starting September 4th, Children's Sunday school classes will meet each Sunday from 10:15am-11:00am. We send a special Thank You and Welcome to our 2011/2012 Children's Sunday school teachers and leaders:

- 2s – Carrie & Ryan Jackson
- 3s – Beth Schroeder
- 4s – Erika Wulff

Kindergarten – Christina Rendon

- 1st Grade – Susan Mathias & Christina Johansson
- 2nd Grade – Kim Clymer
- 3rd Grade – Lori Brill & Pam Boerst
- 4th & 5th Grade – Peter & Hans Curran

Sunday School Coordinator – Kim Kubala

Christian Education News!

Youth Praise Team - Will be starting up again this fall for 2nd-8th graders – if you enjoy singing praises – come join the fun!

JAM (Jesus & Me) – Our Wednesday evening “Jesus and Me” program from ages 4 through 5th grade is suspended until volunteer leadership is in place for the program. To lead or to help, please contact Pam Dieterich at: childrensministry@pvlc.org. You can make a big difference!

Next Children's Ministry Meeting – Come see what fun things we have going on with Children's ministry this fall. We meet the 4th Sunday of each month at 11:15am. Our next meeting is Sunday, September 25th - all are welcome.

For more information on Children's Ministry (2s – 5th grade), please email us at childrensministry@pvlc.org.

Palm Valley Lutheran Cooperative Preschool

September brings us back to school! The preschool staff and children are excited to begin another fun school year. Our themes for the month will be Back to School, Apples, All About Me and Family.

We still have a few openings in our program. Please tell your neighbors and friends about us! Preschool information can be found on the preschool website www.palmvalleypreschool.org. You can always reach us by calling the preschool office at 512-388-5054 or emailing us at abc123@palmvalleypreschool.org.

Cathy Cummings, Director
Natalie Cearley, Assistant Director

ADULT EDUCATION NEWS

Have you ever wondered where your money goes? Come learn how to better manage your money and your life. Our church is hosting Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace class to teach God's way of handling money. The class is Dave teaching on video followed by small group discussions. The class will show how to really live like never before with lessons on saving, debt elimination, investing and real estate to name a few. Over a million families have changed their family trees through Financial Peace, and we want to give you the opportunity to do the same.

The class costs \$99 per family for a lifetime membership. It will be on Wednesday evenings, starting **September 14th**, from 6:00 PM- 8:00 PM and runs thirteen weeks until **December 14th**. For more information or to register contact Tracy Nolan at: financialpeace@pvlc.org.



Random thoughts from my head to yours....

As our students go back to school this month, let us continue to pray for them.

This summer the youth studied **Matthew 22:37**:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind.

They learned and looked at all the different things we love with our HEART and how we need to give more if it's to Jesus.

They learned that we need to STOMP the ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts) in our MIND.

They learned that no matter what is going on, we need to say, "It is well with my SOUL" because we have Jesus.

I hope you will join me in praying for the protection of their hearts, minds and souls as they go out and seek to live for Jesus every day.

In his love,

Anna Froehlich

SPIRIT Fest:

November 13, 2011

The Dell Diamond will host 105.9's *SPiRiT Fest* faith-based music festival on Nov. 13. Acts will include Tenth Avenue North, Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith and Third Day. If you would like more information please contact Anna Froehlich (see contact info below).

Commitments to buy tickets are due to Anna no later than **September 10, 2011**. The ticket cost is \$15 per person.

ELCA National Youth Gathering:

July 18-21, 2012

National Youth Gathering will be in New Orleans, LA for those entering the 9th- 12th grades plus the class of 2012. The Cost of the trip will be \$700 per student. A \$150 deposit for members or \$200 for non-members is due **September 25, 2011** to reserve your student's spot! Sign up today on the youth bulletin board.

Upcoming events:

2011:

- Sep 10 - Commitment deadline for SPIRIT Fest
- Sep 25 - Deposit deadline for ELCA National Youth Gathering (Classes of 2012-2017)
- Oct 22 - Fall Fair at PVLC
- Nov 4-6 - Jr. High Gathering
- Nov 13 - SPIRIT Fest at Dell Diamond
- Dec 7, 2011 - Last Meeting of 2011 and Christmas Party

2012:

- Jan 13-16 – Southwest Synod Sr. High Youth Gathering in Austin
- July 18-21 - National ELCA Youth Gathering New Orleans, LA

Contact info for Anna Froehlich:

Office: (512) 255-3322

E-mail: youth@palmvalleylutheranchurch.org