



*From the Pulpit*



## “CHURCH MEMBERSHIP: ‘What Does This Mean?’ ”

Happy New Year to you, Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church! As we begin this new year together, we will examine what it means to be the church of Christ and what membership in His church means. Through the first part of the Epiphany season in the month of January we will be exploring these questions each Sunday morning, culminating with the celebration of our 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a church on January 26<sup>th</sup>. I'd like to encourage every member of Shepherd of the Valley to truly make an effort to attend every one of our Sunday segments in this sermon vital series: **“THE BODY.”**

By way of an introduction, I'd like to begin exploring these questions in a general way. What is the “Church?” In the Explanation of Luther's *Small Catechism* the church is identified in a number of ways: the visible church of God; a denomination; a local congregation; a building/house of worship. The church, or communion of saints that we speak of in the creeds refers to all believers in Christ (and only believers), that is the invisible church. The local congregation like Shepherd of the Valley that gathers around the Word and Sacraments and professes the Christian faith is called the visible church. The visible church then is made up of true believers and untrue (hypocritical) believers, sadly. As we consider the church of Christ, its mission and what it means to be a member of the church, we will be talking about true believing Christian church members.

So, what do you think it means to be a true Christian church member? Even if you can't quote chapter and verse from the Bible, what do you think God expects of the members of His church? Note, as we proceed it is not what the local visible church expects of its members. It is what God teaches us in His holy Word about membership and His will. For example, one church I know of requires that in order to be considered an active voting member, one must attend worship services more than 50% of the time. Is that what God's Word teaches? Well, one is going to be hard pressed to specifically substantiate this. But, in light of the first and third commandments, what would you believe God's will is for a true believer and follower of His? Does anyone honestly believe that it is honoring God's will for His followers to attend church on Christmas, Easter and other rare occasions? Our January sermon series is not an attempt to set up a guideline or policy of what Shepherd of the Valley says one must do to be a church member. Rather, it is a journey through God's Word and what THE GOOD SHEPHERD teaches that faithful discipleship and church membership are.

The New Testament holds up several images of what the church of God is and who its members are. To be a member of the church of the Lord means to be a member of the body of which he is the head. In Ephesians 1: 22,23, the apostle Paul identified the body as the church. He said: "And (God) has put all things under His (Jesus) feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of him that fills all in all." To be a member of the church means to be a worker in the vineyard of the Lord. If you are a member of the church, you are to be a laborer, or worker in his vineyard. (Matthew 20:1). To be a member of the church is also to be a stone in the spiritual temple of God. The apostle Peter said, "You also, as living stones, are built up as a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (I Peter 2:5). To be a member of the church means to be married to Christ, as Paul told his brothers they were "dead to the law . . . so that they should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead" (Romans 7:4). It means to be a citizen in Christ's kingdom, according to Colossians 1: 12; 13, and a child in God's family, Galatians 3:26,27. In general, membership in Christ's church is about serving Him and loving others as Christ did. As Harry Wendt puts it in the Crossways Bible study, it is about "living now as we will live in heaven."

Membership in the church of the New Testament means the enjoyment of many rich spiritual blessings. It means that we have been called to live a life of holiness and sanctification, as those who have been justified in Christ. Membership also involves responsibilities. Since membership involves the highest and holiest privileges, it also involves some great and serious responsibilities. The idea that some seem to have, that is, that they will let others do all of the work, to build up God's kingdom here, and then that they will share in the rewards at the end of the day, is an idea that is foreign and unknown to the Scriptures. We have a duty, a calling and a responsibility. This means then that faithful members will: 1. Know, confess and remain faithful to the Holy Scriptures; 2. Avoid false teachings, religions and organizations that promote that which is contrary to God's Word; 3. Seek to promote and participate in the fellowship and the activity of the local congregation especially around the Word and Sacraments; 4. Do one's best to preserve the peace, unity and harmony of the body, the church; 5. And, as a member of the church, seek to bear fruit, and utilize one's God-given talents especially in reaching out to others with the saving Gospel.

In the end one might say that the church and membership in it is all about **relationship**. In Holy Baptism we are brought into a saving relationship with Jesus and gathered into relationship with all believers as His Body, the church. Our calling and mission as His church is to share the Good News so that others might also be brought into a saving relationship with the Lord and fellowship in His church. May God bless us in this new year as we faithfully serve and follow Him as His new creation through water and the Word, as His bride He came and sought!

Pastor Dennis Krueger

## QUILTING FOR LUTHERAN WORLD



Hello everyone from the quilting group. We want to wish you all the very best for the year ahead and God's blessings. We are on break right now until the 4th Saturday of January. We love to have folks come help out and visit with us. It should be soon that we can enter our church name into the LWR website and track where our kits and quilts are right now that we sent to them in October. We have the year ahead to start our new projects and everyone is looking forward to getting started. Come see us when we are back to work. If you need more information on our group call Linda Olson 276-0373.

## BOOK FAIR & BAKE SALE

It's that time again! SVLC is having our 2nd annual Valentine book fair and bake sale to support the SVLC assistance fund with matching funds from Thrivent on Feb. 8 from 8-2! Please save your books, jigsaw puzzles, board games, DVD's & CD's. Donations can be dropped off at the fellowship hall from noon to 6 p.m. on Feb. 6, and from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Feb. 7. Baked goods can be dropped off Feb. 7th until 6 p.m. or the day of the sale by 9 a.m. We need volunteers (**Men: we need your muscle!**) for various tasks. **There will be a sign up sheet in the church lobby starting Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>. For more information or questions, please contact Terry Mack (924-8210), Marlene Alexander (242-6571) or the church office (924-4688)**



## LWML

### Meeting and Movie Evening



Ladies! Jan 17th, at 6:00 pm we will have a brief meeting to lay out the year of coming events and plan some hands-on mission projects. Bring your mites boxes (hopefully filled) to support the national projects.

We are asking everyone to wear their pajamas. Should be fun to see what we all come up with (no slinky nighties please). It will be a girl's evening of fun (no - we will not be spending the night!). Bring your favorite movie snack and beverage to enjoy while watching the movie. We will also be making popcorn. If anyone needs a ride please let us know at the office or contact Ruth Ann Krueger.

Looking forward to seeing everyone and starting off a new year of women's ministry at Shepherd of the Valley.

## WHAT'S IN YOUR CLOSET ???

Do you have shoes, warm clothes or old sleeping bags or blankets in your closets or attic that you don't use or probably won't need?

Central City Lutheran Mission where Marilyn Kraft is now on staff needs old useable shoes and warm clothes especially for men but they also accept and distribute women's and children's items (washed please). You may give them to Pastor Ron or Ruby or bring them to the office conference room.

In the cold months Central City Lutheran Mission takes in 70 homeless men each night who frequently need shoes and blankets and something soft to sleep on.



Dear Congregation,

With January 2014 it will be four years that we have had Tai Chi at our church. We average 12 to 15 students every week. Some have been coming since we started. We have fun, work hard and laugh a lot. My thanks to Marge (assistant instructor) who made this possible. And a very special thanks to my BEST and Favorite class. God bless you all.



Suzy Langhorne, Instructor



### **Celebrating an Anniversary**

Is there another ever-so-faithful group of people as our Braille Workers? For twelve years, this group of approximately 20 fellows and gals have met every week (except for 2 weeks) over these twelve years to collate, staple, address and mail copies of the Lutheran Hour Sermons in large print. These copies are mailed to addresses in the United States and many parts of the world, reaching out to those visually challenged but hungry for the Word.

Ask any of them why they continue to do it - and we believe they will say it is a mission of the heart, as well as an opportunity to fellowship with other Christians as they hear our Lord's teaching - to reach out into all the world.

Pray for us as we move into the 13th Year.

Anne Neudecker, Coordinator

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### **Healing with Hope: Grief Survival Series**

There is power in naming the feelings that go with our losses or anticipated loss, but if we stop with a description of our pain, we have only done half the work. We need to come to believe in our ability to survive. We need to hope. We need to feel that there still is a future for us. If you have lost a spouse, child, family member, or a friend it is difficult to feel optimistic about tomorrow and it seems that most people do not understand the deep hurt that you feel.

The Healing with Hope Grief Survival Series at Riverside Community Hospital offers you a safe place to express how you feel with others that have lost and are experiencing the same feelings. This is what makes the Healing with Hope sessions so special, sharing with others that understand. You will have the opportunity to meet others who have experienced a recent loss, to learn their story and share your own. You will come to realize that grief is not a disease or mental illness, but rather a natural human process filled with as much opportunity as it is with pain. Healing with Hope creates avenues for healthy expression of pain and encourages personal growth. To be genuine survivors, we have to become active in our own healing process.

What You Will Learn:

- What is Grief and Why is it So Hard?
- How Grief Affects You
- Healthy Grieving
- Grieving During the Holidays
- Helping Others that have Loss
- Regain Your Identity
- Enjoy Life in Spite of Your Grief
- Journaling, Why it's Important
- Stress Management
- How to Work through Your Grief
- Surviving Grief



Group sessions are held Tuesday evenings 6:30 - 8:30 pm at Riverside Community Hospital's Cancer Center, located at 4500 Brockton Ave., Riverside, CA 92501. Results are best when there is at least six months from time of loss to entering the sessions. Groups are starting soon. Call now for starting dates and to reserve your spot. *Pre-registration is required.* To Register Call: (951) 788-3590. These sessions are at no cost! Requires an eight week commitment.

## Un-apologetic column 10

### Can I Get A Witness?

Well, I hope you all had a blessed Christmas! As promised, I am starting off the New Year by picking up on my series on door to door evangelists that you will encounter from other religions. I completed my series on Mormonism, and would now like to take a look at the Jehovah's Witnesses. Before we get into the nuts and bolts of the faith of the JW's, I would like to offer some personal reflections on interacting with this group.

I have to admit straight out of the gate here, this series will be a bit more academic in nature than my articles on Mormonism. I don't mean to say that I've never had personal interactions with Jehovah's Witnesses before, I have. But much to my dismay, they seem to be far less willing to engage once they encounter resistance to their ideas. I have had some very pleasant and engrossing conversations with Mormons, but not so much with the JW's. I use to think there was a problem with the tactics or methods I was using. But in discussing this problem with other Christian case makers, I have found that they have had similar experiences. JW's are quick to talk and instruct, but often turn tail and run when they are asked to defend their views. At times, it's not even your ideas that will cause them to flee, but something completely out of your control.

Cindy had an interesting encounter with the door to door evangelists here in Moreno Valley. I returned home from work one day to have her tell me the Witness's had been by. I was excited! Finally, all my training and study would be put to use! Cindy would triumphantly tell me how she had bested their arguments and brought them to the foot of the cross. They would have been overwhelmed with her articulate and grace filled defense of the gospel. "What did you say to them?" I asked. "Nothing," she replied. I was disappointed. "What do you mean?" Had she frozen up? Couldn't think of a good starting point? What had gone wrong? "They wanted to know if anyone in our house spoke Spanish, and when I said no, they left."

Sound odd? It did to me. After all, they were having this conversation in English. Why didn't they try and convert Cindy? What did speaking Spanish have to do with anything? I can't envision withholding the good news of Jesus from someone I could clearly communicate with if they were willing to talk to me. But after some reflection, an idea began to form in my mind, and it has grown in certainty with each ensuing interaction with the JW's. Their actions actually make sense on a works based theology. You see, the JW's believe evangelism is a work that will gain them good standing and glory in the afterlife (I will discuss their views on heaven in the articles to follow). In other words, it's not so much important that they actually win someone to their point of view. What was important to them was that they were out doing the work. They didn't realize the subtle message they were sending.

What was that message? We don't really care about you. We don't care what happens to you when you die. We just want to get our work done and go home. Not the demographic we're looking for? Too bad for you! This should serve as a warning to us in our own evangelistic efforts. Knowing what you believe and why you believe it is critical. But we can never forget the reason we make this effort. It's not to get a notch on our spiritual belt. It's not an attempt to help God out and get in good with the big man upstairs. If the message Jesus gave was true, and He was who he said He was, then there is much at stake. No less than the ultimate fate of our eternal souls. We need to make sure our message is presented lovingly and with genuine passion and concern for the people we are talking to. Winning the argument is not as important as winning the person.

Ok, next month I will give you some background on the Jehovah's Witnesses and some basic tenets of their faith. Until then, remain passionate in the love of Christ!

Your Servant, Drew Covert



**Village Concert**  
**Air Force Village West - Memorial Chapel**  
**21233 Lemay Drive, Riverside**



**BLUE ROSE TRIO: Rose Chen, piano;**  
**Lars Hoefs, cello; Karl Pasch, clarinet**

**Sunday, January 26, 2014 - 3:00 PM**

Pianist **Rose Chen** came to the United States in 1997 after winning numerous solo piano awards as a teenager and making her solo debut at the National Concert Hall in her native Taiwan. **Lars Hoefs** received a Doctorate degree studying cello with Ronald Leonard at USC's Thornton School of Music, where he was teaching assistant for the Contemporary Music Ensemble, winner of LA Weekly's "Ensemble of the Year." He was recently appointed Professor of Cello and Music History at Sao Paulo State University in Campinas, Brazil. Clarinetist **Karl Pasch** was born and raised in Anchorage, Alaska, where he is currently active as a clarinetist, conductor, and composer. For more information call 951-697-2928, email funds4art@earthlink.net or go to their website [www.villageconcerts.net](http://www.villageconcerts.net)

## Power Point Schedule for January & February

1/5	Joshua Stange	Amanda Johansen
1/12	Bud Kenefick	Jim Wilson
1/19	Luke Hamann	Abby Covert
1/26	Gerry Klepps	Bob Maurer
2/2	Joshua Stange	Bob Maurer
2/9	Luke Hamann	Amanda Johansen
2/16	Gerry Klepps	Abby Covert
2/23	Bud Kenefick	Marvin Niles

If you need to change your schedule, or have any questions on how to run the system, contact Drew Covert at 951-525-8111 or [lcmsdrew@roadrunner.com](mailto:lcmsdrew@roadrunner.com). Thank you all for your service to our Church and our Lord!

## Joseph Project - Community (Citywide) food

### Bank

Shepherd is working with other churches in Moreno Valley with this community food bank that provides food for the needy every Thursday from a distribution center at the Koinonia Evangelistic Center, 21866 Brill Rd., Moreno Valley (951-867-3050). Volunteers are needed to help out with distribution, sorting, clean up, etc. at the center. Contributions to the Joseph Project will be gratefully accepted through Shepherd. Please pray for this ministry and volunteer your time and talents! Contact Larry Alexander for more information.



Being an LCEF investor means providing the dollars needed to fund loans for churches, schools and ministries within the LCMS. Your investment also provides money for housing loans for our pastors and teachers. Why not talk to your congregation representative, Larry Alexander, today for more information about the ministry of the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. You can also get more information by calling 1-800-843-5233.

### JOIN IN THE CHALLENGE



This is a plea that you help build the Prayer Army we need so badly. Join us in choosing a time (maybe even 10 or 15 minutes) of any day of the week that is best for you individually and lift your silent (or loud) voices to the Lord. Ask for His touch on Shepherd, our Pastor, the members of our congregation, our school, and our community. His promise is clear - if His people gather together in prayer, He will hear our prayers. Let's do it!

## THE LUTHERAN HOUR

*Proclaiming Christ for 75 Years.*

"The Lutheran Hour" and other Lutheran Hour Ministry broadcasts can be heard on KKLA Radio 99.5 FM and KPRO 1570 AM. Check out [lhm.org](http://lhm.org) or the radio station's website to find dates and times of broadcasts. You can also listen the programs directly from the LHM website [www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org).



**DON'T FORGET  
YOUR FOOD  
DONATIONS FOR  
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EACH SUNDAY!  
Thank You!**

### NEEDED FOR CRAFT PROJECTS:



Old cds & cases, Greeting card fronts, Laundry soap scoops, Film containers,

Powdered drink mix cans, Magazines, Plastic baby food containers Prescription bottles (small), Insulin bottles, Candy boxes, Advertising magnets Small bottles, containers, boxes Empty thread spools (wood or plastic) Tins (from band aids, Altoids, tea, etc.) Starbucks-type bottles with lids and carton

Bring to the church or office. These items are made into craft items and given to local cancer patients undergoing treatment. Thank you each and everyone for your help.



**Thursdays at 9:30 AM  
In the Fellowship Hall  
Presented by Suzy Langhorne  
Certified Instructor  
FREE! Please join us.**

### SAVE BOX TOPS FOR OUR SCHOOL!



Specially marked box tops are worth \$.10 each when redeemed from Box Tops for Education. Encourage friends & family, near & far to help, too. Thanks for taking the time to help our school.

### SCRIP AVAILABLE!

We have scrip available for Staters Bros. Stop by the SCRIP table after services or at the school during the week.

*The sponsors appearing on the back cover of the newsletter help defray the cost of printing the Shepherd's Staff, please give them your consideration when possible.*

# January 2014

*Sunday Worship: 8 AM and 10:45 AM - Communion: 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sundays*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<p><i>1</i></p> 	<p><i>2</i></p> <p>8:00 AM BrailleMail(H)</p> <p>9:30 AM Tai Chi (H)</p> <p>10:30 AM Crossways Bible Study (O)</p>	<p><i>3</i></p> <p>10:00 AM School Chapel (S)</p> <p>1:00 PM - 7:00 PM Red Cross Blood Drive (H)</p>	<p><i>4</i></p> <p>8:30 AM Cursillo Grouping @ Panera Bread</p>
<p><i>5</i></p> <p>9:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Class (Y-O-H)</p> <p>6:00 PM Messiahs Messengers (H)</p>	<p><i>6</i></p> <p>10:00 AM First Place TLC (H)</p> <p>7:00 PM Women of Faith TLC (H)</p>	<p><i>7</i></p> <p>5:30 PM School Board (O)</p> <p>5:45 PM Chancel Choir (S)</p>	<p><i>8</i></p> <p>10:00 AM Womens Faith Journey TLC (O)</p> <p>6:00 PM Awana / Elementary (Y)</p> <p>7:00 PM Praise Team (S)</p>	<p><i>9</i></p> <p>8:00 AM BrailleMail(H)</p> <p>9:30 AM Tai Chi(H)</p> <p>10:00 AM School Chapel (S)</p> <p>10:30 AM What Does This Mean Class (O)</p> <p>12:30 PM Staff (O)</p> <p>7:00 PM Band (H)</p>	<p><i>10</i></p> <p>10:00 AM Good Grief TLC (H)</p>	<p><i>11</i></p> <p>9:00 AM Knights of the Holy Spirit Bible Study</p>
<p><i>12</i></p> <p>9:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Class (Y-O-H)</p> <p>6:00 PM Confirmation (O)</p> <p>6:00 PM Messiahs Messengers (H)</p> <p>6:00 PM Sr. High Youth (Y)</p> <p>BP Screening after Services</p>	<p><i>13</i></p> <p>9:00 AM Women's Koffee Klatch @ Brandon's</p>	<p><i>14</i></p> <p>5:45 PM Chancel Choir (S)</p> <p>7:00 PM Girl Scouts (Y)</p> <p>7:00 PM Lay Ministers (H)</p>	<p><i>15</i></p> <p>6:00 PM Awana / Elementary (Y)</p> <p>7:00 PM Praise Team (S)</p>	<p><i>16</i></p> <p>8:00 AM BrailleMail(H)</p> <p>9:30 AM Tai Chi (H)</p> <p>10:30 AM Crossways Bible Study (O)</p>	<p><i>17</i></p> <p>10:00 AM School Chapel (S)</p> <p>6:00 PM LWML Meeting &amp; Movie Evening (H)</p>	<p><i>18</i></p>
<p><i>19</i></p> <p>9:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Class (Y-O-H)</p> <p>6:00 PM Jr / Sr Hi Youth (Y)</p> <p>6:00 PM Messiahs Messengers (H)</p>	<p><i>20</i></p> <p>10:00 AM First Place TLC (H)</p> <p>7:00 PM MV Chorale Rehearsal (S)</p> <p>7:00 PM Women of Faith TLC</p> <p><b>MLK Jr. Holiday - School &amp; Office Closed</b></p>	<p><i>21</i></p> <p>5:45 PM Chancel Choir (S)</p> <p>6:00 PM M &amp; M Directors (O)</p>	<p><i>22</i></p> <p>10:00 AM Womens Faith Journey TLC (O)</p> <p>6:00 PM Awana / Elementary (Y)</p> <p>7:00 PM Praise Team (S)</p>	<p><i>23</i></p> <p>8:00 AM BrailleMail(H)</p> <p>9:30 AM Tai Chi(H)</p> <p>10:00 AM School Chapel (S)</p> <p>10:30 AM What Does This Mean Class (O)</p> <p>12:30 PM Staff (O)</p> <p>7:00 PM Band (H)</p>	<p><i>24</i></p> <p>10:00 AM Good Grief TLC (H)</p>	<p><i>25</i></p> <p>7:30 AM Men's Breakfast at Brandon's</p> <p>9:00 AM Quilting for LWR (H)</p>
<p><i>26</i></p> <p>9:30 AM Sunday School &amp; Bible Class (Y-O-H)</p> <p>12:00 PM SVLC 34th Anniversary &amp; Voters Assembly Meeting (H)</p> <p>6:00 PM Confirmation (O)</p> <p>6:00 PM Messiahs Messengers (H)</p> <p>6:00 PM Sr. High Youth (Y)</p>	<p><i>27</i></p> <p>6:00 PM Diamond Girls (H)</p>	<p><i>28</i></p> <p>5:45 PM Chancel Choir (S)</p> <p>7:00 PM Girl Scouts (Y)</p> <p>7:00 PM TLC for Cancer Patients (H)</p>	<p><i>29</i></p> <p>6:00 PM Awana / Elementary (Y)</p> <p>7:00 PM Praise Team (S)</p>	<p><i>30</i></p> <p>8:00 AM BrailleMail(H)</p> <p>9:30 AM Tai Chi (H)</p> <p>10:30 AM Crossways Bible Study (O)</p>	<p><i>31</i></p> <p>10:00 AM School Chapel (S)</p>	



# The Shepherd's Staff

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WORSHIP SERVICE TIMES: Sunday: 8:00 & 10:45 AM  
5th Sunday of the month - One service only at 9:30 AM

*"Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." — Francis of Assisi*

**SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY  
LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL**  
11650 Perris Blvd.  
Moreno Valley, CA 92557  
Church (951) 924-4688  
School (951) 924-3422  
www.shepherdofthevalley.net

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**DENNIS KRUEGER, SENIOR PASTOR  
RON KRAFT, EMERITUS PASTOR  
LINDA WILLIAMSON, SCHOOL DIRECTOR**

## January 2014



### HAPPY 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup> Shepherd of the Valley will celebrate 34 years of blessings and ministry as a congregation with a rededication to serving as God's ministers/members in both worship services and a light luncheon following the 10:45am service. Through the month of January we will be focusing on what it means to be a church member and disciple of Jesus. On the last Sunday of the month we will respond with a rededication of ourselves as God's church. Then after the services we'll gather in the Fellowship Hall to celebrate our calling and enjoy a luncheon together. Please plan on joining us on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup> for worship and fellowship. A congregational meeting will follow the luncheon at about 1:30pm or so. More details will be coming throughout the month.

### CONGREGATIONAL VOTERS' MEETING: Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>

Following our anniversary-discipleship celebration on the last Sunday of January there will be a voters' meeting to hear half-year **update** reports and consider a very important question. For the past four years or so we have leased out half of our school building and an office to the Big Springs School. With our Preschool completely filled the question has arisen whether it is time to discontinue leasing out this space and using it for our school operation. This is a very important decision as we consider how we will make up the loss of \$54,000 per year in lease revenue. The current lease extends through the summer to the next school year. The reason for considering this question now is to allow Big Springs time to look for a new location if the congregation decides to not re-sign a lease agreement. This is a very important matter and truly requires the careful prayer and consideration of all the members of Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church. More specific information will be mailed out to members' homes in January so that everyone can pray and prepare for the meeting.