What would you do if you were told there were very few guest groups scheduled for the month of October? My first thought was “God must have a reason.” When Southern California Edison started shutting off our power every time there was a windy day, I realized how vulnerable our operation was to the whim of a large utility. When Laraine, our Food Service Director, went to the emergency room with severe pain, I realized that if we had a full schedule, it would have been challenging to minister to our guests. God knew all this before it happened and allowed our calendar to be lighter than normal. Laraine had her gall bladder removed and was out for two weeks, but praise the Lord, she is “back in the saddle” now. As far as our utilities, going forward we need to secure a generator that is California Emissions Compliant and capable of powering our main electrical panel. This could cost as much as $40,000. We are trusting the Lord for wisdom in this area.

Whether or not you have been directly affected by the planned power outages on windy days, you’ve probably heard about those people forced to go without electricity (and water if on a private system) for days. Because we are in somewhat of a “wilderness area,” we have been targeted by Southern California Edison repeatedly. Praise the Lord, so far we have not had guests on the property the days these outages have taken place. However, it is a major inconvenience for staff as we have tried to find enough small generators to keep the refrigerators going. We have also rationed water so we didn’t run out until the power was restored. In order to power our main electrical panel, we need a 130 KW 240 volt 3 phase Generator that is California Compliant with emissions regulations. A new generator meeting these standards costs $30,000-$40,000. If you would like to donate one or contribute toward the purchase of one, please contact the Ranch.

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Round-up
The Lord blessed us with beautiful weather for the day as 104 people gathered at the Ranch for the annual business meeting for our associations and a message from Mike Hess, National Representative for the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. Music was provided by Bible Baptist, Santa Monica; Calvary Baptist, Compton; Faith Calvary Baptist, Los Angeles; and First Baptist of Walteria, Torrance. Following lunch, participants enjoyed activities around the Ranch before the ice cream social at 3 p.m. Plan to join us on November 7, 2020, for our next Round-up.

Projects Update
We were blessed with one RVICS (Roving Volunteers in Christ’s Service) couple in November. Jim operated and worked on our tractors, welded, and helped us with some roof repairs while his wife Denise helped out in the office.

Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church in Santa Ana brought a work team out the second weekend in November. Volunteers installed two hitching posts by the facade in Tent Village, set posts for a future project, fabricated steel racks, moved electrical wiring at the horse barn, painted a shipping container, repaired the roof on a shed, and did some landscaping work. We thank the Lord for our volunteers!

Home Going
Camp Victory began its camping program at its present location in 1956 and was operated primarily as a seasonal operation. As interest began to wane, the board of directors considered selling the property. In 1969, with no buyers interested, the board hired the newly married couple Gordon & Carolyn Nicholson. Gordon had a BS in Mechanical Engineering from USC and a BA in Natural Science from Westmont, and Carolyn had a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Cal State Fullerton. Gordon spent a year getting our conditional use permit from the county of Riverside and then coordinated the construction of the Las Flores Cabins. He was also instrumental in the installation of our water tank on the hill. Carolyn used her talents in the office and later in the kitchen and in housekeeping. Under their tenure, the name was changed to Victory Ranch, and the property was developed on a ranch theme. Gordon and Carolyn developed the WEST Week program to challenge and train young people with a desire to serve the Lord on staff. They saw the Ranch through some financially challenging times. Houston Morrison once told me that the Ranch wouldn’t be here today if it weren’t for the leadership of the Nicholsons. In 1995, Carolyn was diagnosed with MS; although, in retrospect, there had been symptoms for close to 10 years. In December of 1995, the Nicholsons left the Ranch and ultimately moved to Madras, Oregon. On December 5, 2019, Carolyn left her earthly body and went into the presence of her Lord and Savior. Please keep Gordon in your thoughts and prayers in the loss of his wife of 54 years.

Spring Retreats
Ladies’ Retreat
The Spring Ladies’ Retreat is scheduled for March 13-14, 2020. The ladies team that is organizing the retreat has picked a theme based loosely on a quote from Alice in Wonderland: “We are all M.A.D. here . . . usually the best people are.” The acronym for M.A.D. is “Making A Difference” with Hebrews 10:24-25 as the theme verses. They are planning a tea party and some other fun activities. Mark your calendar and watch for more details in the days ahead.

Men’s Retreat
The Spring Men’s Retreat will be held on March 27-28, 2020, with Ken Rudolph scheduled as our speaker. (It took over two years to get his schedule free.) Ken’s topic will be “Joy, Inexpressible and Full of Glory!” Get a group together from your church, invite a friend or neighbor, and plan to join us for a wonderful time at the Ranch.

Please see the Ranch website for details on the Men’s Retreat sports competitions.

Family Fun Day
We will host our third annual Family Fun Day on Saturday, April 4, 2020. The purpose of the day is to enjoy this event as a family. There will be multiple “stations” around the Ranch with games designed for every member of the family to play. From 2 year-olds to grandparents, this is designed for family participation. If you don’t have a family, adopt one for the day and bring them with you to the Ranch.

We will have lunch around noon followed by an egg hunt, horse rides, archery, 4x4 firetruck rides, and more. Watch for details or visit our website.