



August 2016, Number 3



Church Together

Faith Alive Summer Day Camp

Faith Lutheran Church in Pioneer, in conjunction with Mt. Cross Ministries, just hosted 37 kids at the Fourth Annual Faith Alive Day Camp, July 4-8. What makes this remarkable is that Faith's congregation consists of about 90 mostly retired people and a Sunday school population of one. (Our youth group consists of the 50-year-olds.)

Four years ago our Sunday school rooms were being used mostly for storage, a prayer and meditation group had taken over the nursery, and no one could remember the last Christmas pageant or children's sermon. "How can we attract more young people" was a constant topic of discussion. We tried family game nights, summer fun days, Friday night pizza parties, movies in our outdoor amphitheater, investing in new Sunday School curriculum, etc. But, other than sponsoring a very active Cub Scout pack, our efforts at bringing children and young people into the church were mostly unsuccessful and short-lived.

It became obvious that we needed to go outside the church to serve the children in our community. So, when we applied to the Mission

Coalition of the Central Valley for a one-time evangelism grant in 2012, we stepped out on a limb and included \$2300 for vacation Bible school - the base amount Mt. Cross Ministries charges for doing day camp at a church facility.

The Holy Spirit at work: We received the grant! And our first annual Faith Alive Day Camp was held in summer 2013. The Mt. Cross counselors brought the curricula, the supplies, the music, and the energy. We brought the enthusiasm. With the direction of our site coordinator Tasha Burkett, the time and talents of many people in the congregation, and the contribution of sundry grandchildren, that first camp was a huge success. Twenty-eight children had fun, made friends and heard the gospel. Many of those 28 have returned to camp every year since. And when they "aged out," they came back as junior-high helpers or senior-high junior counselors. This year we had five helpers and six junior counselors. And we voted to send one of the junior counselors to Mt. Cross Counselor-in-Training camp for two weeks.

This year, our fourth, we had 37 kids registered. The Mt. Cross counselors said we had one of the largest camps and could not believe it when we told them that none of the kids were from our church. "How did you get all those kids to come?" We didn't. It was, and continues to be, the work of the Holy Spirit.

The highlight of this year's camp was the surprise arrival of local firefighters to spray the kids on "water day." Several alumni volunteers showed up that final day to join in the fun. Every January, we start collecting school supplies so the campers can put together school kits. This year we sent 33 kits back with the Mt. Cross counselors for shipment.

We were able to hold our second annual day camp with a Warner Grant from the Synod, but we are only eligible to apply every other year. The Holy Spirit showed up again with a large individual donation to the youth activities fund that enabled us to host our fourth annual day camp. We also hold a very successful fundraiser/camp kickoff in March - a Potato Head Dinner (baked potatoes with all the trimmings, salad, dessert and lots of potato games.)

Faith Lutheran Church is located on Highway 88 east of Jackson in Amador County. Our new permanent pastor is the Rev. Janna Mikkelsen. She and her husband Mark live in the parsonage next to the church.

We are fortunate to have nearly four acres of wooded land around the church. In addition to our outdoor amphitheater on "Easter Hill," we have walking trails, a labyrinth, and even an ancient Miwuk

grinding rock. The perfect setting for camp. For a whole week every year, the shouts and squeals, laughter and song ring out throughout the church and echo throughout the year - not only at Faith Lutheran but in the hearts and lives of the children of our community.

By Karin Heikkila

Do you have a story that you would like to share? Send any Church Together story requests to mic@spselca.org.

**"God's Work. Our Hands."
September 11, 2016
Plan now to enter the contest!**

"God's Work. Our Hands." Day is our opportunity to celebrate a day of service across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Congregations throughout the Sierra Pacific Synod and the nation will be preparing food for hungry people, painting houses, planting gardens, visiting isolated people and performing thousands of other acts of joy and mercy.



It is time to start planning your congregation's projects for that day. For a bulletin insert and more information on planning your day [CLICK HERE](#).

Sharing your projects and ideas with other congregations will give them ideas for next year. To encourage you to do just that, we're having a contest! There are two categories: video and narrative. The winning congregation in each category will have the honor of having a \$100.00 gift made to ELCA Good Gifts in their name. How cool is that?

Here is how it works, along with the pertinent deadlines:

1. Your congregation submits either a written narrative or a video of its "God's Work. Our Hands." Project, along with an entry form, which will be available in late August, as well as instructions for submitting your video. Each congregation is limited to one submission, either a video or a narrative. Deadline: October 15, 2016.

2. The narratives and videos are posted on the [Sierra Pacific Synod website](#), where you will vote for your favorite. Everyone can vote-your grumpy uncle,

your best friend, the sweet auntie who bakes the best ginger cookies.
Deadline: December 15, 2016.

3. We tally the votes and announce a winner, sometime in early 2017.

4. The checks go to ELCA Good Gifts.

Those of us at Church Together can hardly wait to see what wonderful projects you are doing.

If you have questions, please send them to: mic@spselca.org.

Committed to being re-formed...
The Sierra Pacific Synod
9985 Folsom Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95827-6628
916-756-1665 · 800-275-3522 · 888-789-6434 (Fax)
www.spselca.org

STAY CONNECTED:

