



July 2016, Number 2



Church Together

"Magnolia Leaves, a Haircut, and the Body of Christ"

Earnest is a homeless member of our community who regularly visits the local churches for help. It is often difficult to understand what kind of help Earnest is asking for because he has a severe speech impediment. Several years ago Earnest wandered into our church on a Sunday morning. The people welcomed him to join us for worship and also for the refreshment hour after the service, and Earnest stayed. I am not sure how many people gave him money but I do know that he left with a full plate of refreshments.

The next Sunday, Earnest was waiting in the church parking lot for the first person to arrive. He had already picked up all the Magnolia leaves that littered our property. He sat through our praise band practice and joined us for worship once more. The pastor's wife gave him some money and suggested that he use part to get a haircut. The following Sunday Earnest was again at church before anyone else to again pick up the leaves but also to show off his new haircut. He was proud to have let everyone know that he had in fact, gotten a haircut.

Earnest has become a regular attendee at our worship. He arrives early every Sunday, at first to pick up the Magnolia leaves. When the trees were removed he would remove the chairs from the table tops where they had been placed

to mop the floor. Every Sunday he sits through the practice of the praise band and the worship service. Before leaving he makes sure that all the trash has been collected.

What is most interesting about Earnest is that he has become our best evangelist. Earnest invites his friends to come with him to worship. As you might imagine these new people are a portion of our community with whom our members do not normally come into contact. These people are not always able to contribute to the budget but they have contributed to our church. His friend, Carmen, was excited to bring a hot dish to our pot-luck. It was a blessing to have chicken enchiladas added to the normal tater-tot hot dish. Carmen has become very involved in an outreach in her home area of Baja-California.

Earnest has given our church an opportunity to show hospitality and grace to someone who is quite different from us. In return, Earnest has introduced us to a portion of our community that often remains unseen.

By Pr. Ed Bastedo, Grace, King City, CA

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:

