



January 2018, Number 10



## Church Together

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### **All Saints Lutheran in Novato Serves Up "Jesus Pizza"**

All Saints Lutheran Church is located directly across the street from San Marin High School in Novato. Looking for a way to interact with the students, All Saints approached the school about the possibility of offering the kids a pizza lunch one day a week. (Church members promised they would not proselytize!) Permission was granted and the pizzas ordered.

The handful of kids who showed up that first Thursday has grown to 120 or more. Very soon, the kids began calling the program "Jesus Pizza." For two bucks, the student gets a slice of pizza, salad, and lemonade. A second slice of pizza goes for a dollar. But kids who stay to put away tables and chairs get a free slice. (Slices are held back for this purpose.) At

Christmas time, pizza was free for everybody.

The church also lets school clubs and organizations hold bake sales on pizza days because they are not allowed on school property.





According to Pat Cash, church administrator, "The kids are respectful and know that these Lutheran Christians enjoy them and are not some sort of weird 'church people.'"

Pizza (pepperoni and plain cheese) is ordered the day before from Costco and



paid for on pick-up. Salad and salad dressing (they stick with ranch) comes from Smart and Final or Costco. Someone sets up tables the night before, and several people come in early to fill salad dishes, make lemonade, and squirt dressing into small cups. (They all wear gloves).

The volunteers often say a prayer before starting to serve. Two people serve the pizza, another collects the money, and another stamps hands. Two other volunteers wander around, interacting with, helping the kids, and having fun with them.

The church had no expectations about any of the students coming to church on Sunday, but one student several years ago asked to speak to the pastor about some concerns she had about a classmate. She did not have a church home or religious background, but the relationship established during the casual, caring lunchtime gathering made her feel comfortable coming to someone she considered her pastor.

The funds for pizza lunch are kept separate from the church's general fund, and, although Jesus Pizza is not a fundraiser, unintended profits are donated to the school at year's end for Safe Grad Night.

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*Do you have a story that you would like to share? Send any Church Together story requests to [mic@spselca.org](mailto:mic@spselca.org).*

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