



Sierra Pacific Synod
committed to being re-formed



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Church Together

Making Merry Music in Meadow Vista

Imagine you have just slid into your pew. You've remembered to put on your Pentecost "red," and the sanctuary is buzzing with excitement. Before you, young cherubs take the lead, playing home-made tambourines and singing the praises of the Spirit. Some of them you recognize from the congregation, but there are new faces, too. How did this all happen?

Be assured, things like this do not just automatically or spontaneously happen in the Church! Someone was inspired to do something, and a lot of hard work happened behind the scenes to make that moment real. In this case, an unfortunate situation opened the door for Faith Lutheran Church in Meadow Vista to serve its community in a new and dynamic way.

When the elementary school music program in Placer Hills Union School District was eliminated, two families from Faith were distraught. They had always valued music and had looked forward to the fourth-grade year, when the kids would be choosing their first instruments. Suddenly, this was all taken away. They had no resources for private instruction or instruments and lamented this new reality with Janine Dexter, Music Director at Faith. Both Ms. Dexter and Pastor Charlane Lines have degrees in Music, and value the vital work that happens in the brains of developing children when they fully engage music. They knew something could be done.

What began as just a simple, "Do you think we could....?" has now become three levels of "Exploring Music," and four levels of "Beginning Band." Ukulele instruction has benefitted both adults and children, and folks are regularly invited to share their joy of music in worship on Sunday mornings, whether they are "into religion" or not. Though there is no requirement for Sunday morning participation, many community members have come to their first worship services at Faith as a result of the music program.



Ms. Dexter says, "My goal is not to steal people from other churches or to 'convert' them to certain beliefs. I just want to open the door and give them a peek into the church."

Funding for this project has come in various ways, including a grant by the Lutheran Development Society of Sacramento. Families contribute what they can and individuals from Faith also donate to the program. Once music businesses hear about the program, they are eager to support and promote it.

Perhaps the most notable story, though, comes from a group called the "Friendly Neighbors." Their motto is "Local People Helping Local People," and their mission is to "help less fortunate neighbors in our community and surrounding areas as well as to engage in activities that enhance the living environment of our communities."

"Friendly Neighbors" is NOT a religious organization and in fact is not permitted to donate money to any religious institution. However, they have been meeting in a room at Faith Lutheran Church for some time and heard about the music program! They have embraced the idea completely and recently provided *twelve* brand new ukuleles to the program and are actively working to provide cases, tuners and music.

Recently, Ms. Dexter was able to attend the local high school band concert. On the stage, she saw students who had come through her elementary classes at Faith. After the concert, the band director shared his gratitude for Faith and its dedication to music. Without "feeder" programs such as these, high school music departments will fade away and disappear. As she chatted with the band director, she was filled with joy, knowing that her Christian faith has surely made a difference for this community.

Sometimes all it takes is a few willing souls asking the question, "Do you think we could....?"





Supper Church

Does your congregation do "Supper Church," or other meal-based worship? We want to hear more about it! Please contact Trudy Franzen or Carl Wilfrid at mic@spselca.org and tell us all about it!

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

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