

## First Lutheran in the Community *Inglewood, Calif.*

“We may be small, but our voices are loud,” said Jeandra Le Beauf, a member at First Lutheran Church, Inglewood, Calif.

Le Beauf began worshipping at First Lutheran because her daughter, Kaya, is a student at the First Lutheran Preschool. Le Beauf was struck by the congregation’s sincere welcome and generosity in the community.

“They feed the homeless and they welcome everyone in,” said Le Beauf. “Now my mother worships here, too.”

At one time, it looked like First Lutheran might close its doors. Then, First Lutheran’s members prayerfully committed the congregation’s finances and future to God. Together with the ELCA Southwest California Synod, they created a plan for action.

The congregation called the Rev. Kristian Johnson, an ELCA-trained mission developer who is fluent in English and Spanish, to serve as pastor. Johnson and his wife Anna-Kari enrolled one of their children at the preschool, and they have formed connections with other parents. Five preschool families joined the congregation within a year.

Your mission support—through the ELCA’s Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit—helps First Lutheran to fund a full time pastor’s salary through 2009.

Membership has grown from 26 to 48, and average weekly worship attendance has grown to 66. The congregation plans to join the New City Parish, a social ministry coalition of Los Angeles congregations working to transform the community.

All of this activity is gaining notice. Recently, Johnson was in a local park and invited some people to church. “First Lutheran . . .” the park lifeguard said, “Isn’t that the church that just reopened?”

For more Stories of Faith in Action, visit [www.elca.org/stewardship/interpreting.html](http://www.elca.org/stewardship/interpreting.html).



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