

FAQ's About Possible Change of Regional Affiliation

These FAQ's will grow over the next few weeks as more questions are received

1. What is the primary reason for considering this change?

Because of our deep American Baptist roots, for the last 4-5 years, the Council has been in on-going conversations with our Region (ABCRM) and Exec. Minister, Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran, regarding a theological statement the region holds. (If you would like to read the whole statement, it is available from Calvary's office, or on the ABCRM website abcrm.org in both the "Bylaws" and "Ordination" categories.) Our conversations have really focused on this key sentence: *"Further, the Region Board and staff will not knowingly employ, appoint to leadership positions, or recommend for ordination any practicing homosexual persons."* This is in conflict with Calvary's Statement of Inclusion. The statement has infringed upon our church autonomy as it has prevented some of our ordination candidates from having their ordination recognized through the Region. This recognition is important for employment as well as for chaplaincy certifications. In the past, unrecognized ordinations were not able to be endorsed nationally. However, the ABHMS (American Baptist Home Mission Society) acknowledged this difficulty, and they currently accept unrecognized ordinations from an ABC congregation, as long as the necessary educational requirements are met. Still, the path is much clearer with a "recognized" ordination. In addition, we have significant leadership and membership who are LGBTQ+ as you know, and we stand firmly behind our theological affirmation that Calvary is *Open to All, Closed to None*. Even so, we have sought to address this very openly and honestly with the Region, not trying to get the Region to change their theology or that of other region churches, but rather just to provide more flexibility by not holding a statement that affects the autonomy of local churches within the Region or that is not inclusive to all the members of its member churches.

2. Why now?

Discussions among Calvary's Council and staff have been occurring for about 5 years now, with multiple inquiries and responses going back and forth between Calvary, ABCRM, and ABCUSA. We have now come to an impasse in our progress in this conversation, and the alignment of our theological values is important to consider in determining our regional affiliations. The Baptist Identity sermon series seemed to be a convenient time for Council to present the history and options to the congregation for consideration.

3. What does regional affiliation mean anyway?

Calvary is an American Baptist congregation, which means we are part of a national association of churches called the American Baptist Churches, USA (ABCUSA). In order to

be connected to ABCUSA, a local church must be a part of a regional association of churches within ABCUSA. (Per the Standing Rules of ABCUSA, no American Baptist church can exist on its own.) For example, Calvary is currently part of the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains (ABCRM).

Regional associations play important roles in their relationships to each church, such as supporting missionaries and going on mission trips, recognizing ordinations, hosting camps and other youth activities, women's ministries, providing funding and support for church and staff needs, helping with church staff transitions, providing education/retreats for staff and seminarians and development of congregational leaders, hosting gatherings of churches at certain times of the year (such as the annual gathering) to worship together, learn and discuss current events and the role of the church in the region and world, and much more...

4. Would this mean leaving the American Baptist Churches USA?

No. Both ABC of the Rocky Mountains and ABC Evergreen Association are part of the ABCUSA. Being American Baptist (ABCUSA) is Calvary's Baptist affiliation. That will not change. Regional associations contain groups of churches under the umbrella of the ABCUSA.

5. What's been done to try to change the ABCRM policy?

Because of our close ties and relationship with the Region for so many years, and because of our deep commitment to being *Open to All, Closed to None* and to our members who are LGBTQ+, we have been thorough in seeking to reconcile these differences. Our efforts to seek compromise and work through this situation have included the following:

- writing ABCUSA to see if there were alternative ways that we could be dually aligned with two regions; this took place primarily during 2016 into 2017. The response came in multiple forms from people, but essentially, none of the options we presented were possibilities.
- inviting ABCRM Exec. Minister Steve Van Ostran to speak with our Council in May 2016 (when Bill Warren was the President of ABCRM) to understand the origins and reasoning for the Statement on Homosexuality and to explain how important this issue of inclusion is to Calvary and how it is affecting not only our ordination candidates, but also members of our church who are allies or who themselves are in the LGBTQ+ community
- upon Steve's recommendation, writing the ordination recognition body - the Ministerial Leadership Committee of ABCRM - in November 2019 to see if they would consider our request to not hold the Statement as one of their criteria

for ordination. After a year of study and further conversation - Rev. David DeMott, the Chair of the MLC sent us a reply in Sept. 2020 declining to consider changing the Region's process/position

6. Is this even a problem? Do we have candidates who wish to be ordained at Calvary that wouldn't then be recognized by ABCRM?

Yes. Reverend Lee Tredwell was one, and we have an active candidate now who is seeking ordination but does not feel it would align with his ethics and values to proceed with the ABCRM due to their policy against ordaining LGBTQ+ ordinands. Jacob Goertz also sought ordination with another denomination for the same reason, as have other ordination candidates.

7. Is the Evergreen Association a "region" like ABCRM?

It is not formally geographically based like ABCRM, but it is made up of churches in western states (plus Venezuela!) and functions organizationally like other ABC regions. It is open to any church joining the Association that wishes to, so it could potentially include members from other states as well. The important thing is whether Calvary wishes to affiliate with this "region" that is more philosophically/theologically aligned rather than staying with the geographically-based one where we are located.

8. Will it be hard to be part of an affiliation that's not geographical?

Because of the way Evergreen is set up, the opportunity to participate may be even more accessible to our membership than current opportunities with ABCRM. For one, they offer quarterly gatherings instead of one annual gathering. They also have more virtual meetings, making participation easier. Hopefully our involvement with our Region will only increase, as a majority of Calvary's current membership does not engage regularly with regional events even though they are often "close to home."

9. How old is the ABCEA?

19 years.

10. What are the differences between ABCRM and ABCEA?

Here is a link to a comparison chart we have compiled to try to digest the key differences and similarities between the two regions. [\(Link\)](#)

11. How is Evergreen structured?

They are led by an Executive Committee and an Executive Minister. Their main organizational components are ethnic caucuses (Asian, Black, Euro, and Hispanic). They use consensus decision-making to determine how to approach important topics.

12. Why do they have the ethnic caucuses?

They feel that this approach helps cultural distinctions to be recognized. Otherwise the region would be driven by either the Euro caucus (largest number of member churches) or the Black caucus (largest number of individual members). This approach ensures that voices from other constituencies are also heard and addressed in making policy decisions. It is more time-consuming, but results in more buy-in from members. Churches have members in all caucuses, and every committee has representation from each caucus.

13. How would this change affect activities in which Calvary participates with the ABCRM?

The Executive Minister for ABCRM has indicated that Calvary would continue to be welcome to participate in ABCRM activities and committees, though they would not be able to be committee Chairs.

14. What is the financial status of the ABCEA, and would this change Calvary's mission giving?

Rev. Doug Avilesbernal, the Evergreen Association Executive Minister, states that they are in a healthy place financially. He indicated that the ABCEA receives the return from the offering of the churches given from United Missions which is about 60% of what the churches give. (As a point of reference, Calvary is budgeted to give \$6,000 to ABCUSA this year, so the ABCRM would get a share of that along with the same share of whatever the other 79 churches in the region give.) The return percentage at Evergreen covers their staff costs. There are endowments to cover ministry costs. Evergreen is 1 of 5 regions that have higher year-to-date ABC contributions for three years in a row. They are not drawing from endowments, and not borrowing for ministry. The endowments come from both churches and individual wills.

The four major mission offering funds would continue to go to ABCUSA with either region.

Calvary's internally-budgeted mission funds would continue to be spent as we choose.

Evergreen also has significant mission involvement – see FAQ below.

15. What mission activities does Evergreen participate in?

Currently, supporting (through their churches) several missionaries and mission work. ABCEA does regional mission trips every other year, on non-biannual years. In Haiti, they

contributed to the building of a school for disadvantaged children, support a vision clinic, and sent thousands of disposable personal protection equipment packages for medical personnel as well as three ventilator machines to support them through the pandemic. Recently, ABCEA concluded a substantial commitment to contribute financially to the recovery process in Puerto Rico following the hurricanes and other natural disasters. Closer to home ABCEA is supporting a trauma care project with a church in Chico, CA for those who are emotionally and mentally recovering from the Paradise fires that destroyed their community.

ART (Anti-Racism Team)- The purpose of this team is to help our Euro churches explore where they are in their awareness of racism within. They engage with and explore where the church is currently and then provide resources for them to continue on their path to become anti-racism churches or begin the exploration process.

Inter-Cultural Team- The task of this group is to help all our caucuses reach beyond their own ethnic spaces and engage in meaningful and substantial relationship. Since we are aware that there are plenty of resources in this important sphere their work is more about connecting to resources in a tailored way. In essence they engage with the church to learn more about it and where it is and then match them with resources available.

As a point of reference here is the ABCRM webpage on missions. Here is a link to the ABCRM missions page: <https://www.abcrm.org/missions> If one hovers over the “more” tab, there are other pages to explore under this category including “Upcoming Mission Trips”, “International Missions”, and more.

16. What educational opportunities does ABCEA offer for ministers/staff?

ABCEA hosts an annual retreat on the second weekend of February for leadership in UNCO format (Unconference format, meaning more participant driven). This format is designed to draw out the needs and energy for engagement within the community. By doing this, ABCEA then designs educational opportunities from these exploration times. (For example, the ART and Inter-Cultural training teams came as a result of these sessions). Each of those provide workshops to our Clergy and Staff in order to increase competency as well as grow capacity.

Currently, ABCEA is redesigning their Sexual Harassment awareness program that is intended to ask all clergy to participate in every 2 years as part of their relationship with the region and continuing education.

Additionally, ABCEA has a Mental Health First responders’ program, which is open to all our clergy (Senior and Staff). This is a gathering led by a professional crisis mental health

practitioner. The reason for this support is that our clergy are often first responders in mental health crisis or in triaging difficulties in that area.

ABCEA is in the beginning steps of opening a relationship with a seminary in Costa Rica to deepen our professional support for clergy, particularly in the very necessary space of working within diversity. This seminary is one of two progressive seminaries in the whole of Latin America. They have been pioneers in the Global Majority (which most in our country call minority groups) in work with LGBTQ+, Native Communities, Women and more communities. They have two courses specifically designed for clergy that ABCEA is very interested in. One is an exploration of Latin American Theological diversity that can open our clergy and leadership to a broader perspective of God and ministry. Additionally, a course on welcoming and living with diversity that ABCEA believes clergy can benefit tremendously from.

ABCEA also provides various opportunities to join in regional leadership which are also considered educational opportunities for leadership.

ABCEA has continuing education scholarships for clergy and they do their best to connect them with other sources to support them in those endeavors. They do not have large scholarships, but there are some resources.

Note: The ABCRM offers pastors and churches continuing education in a number of ways. They hold an annual CE event on the Thursday prior to the Gathering and they offer various events throughout the year in the form of retreats and small conferences. Since the pandemic, the RM region has also been offering CE via webinar.

The ABCRM also offers scholarships and grants for clergy/chaplains in various CE endeavors.

17. What children/youth activities do you offer?

This is a space the EA has not occupied much as a region beyond Children, family and youth support ministers. However, awareness of this need is growing, and the EA is working to support churches in more intentional ways. Many churches in the EA have active and rich children's ministries as examples for EA's endeavor to enrich this ministry, as well as exploring how the EA can best support them.

18. What about summer camps for children/youth?

Youth can still attend Quaker Ridge! Anyone can attend the ABCRM camps. There is a very small additional fee for those not affiliated with the ABCRM, but Calvary can assist with that if needed. In addition, while it would require extra travel, the ABCEA has its

own camps, 3 in WA (Bethel, Burton, and Cascade Meadows) and 1 in ID (Ross Point). They each have their own website. [Camp Bethel](#) [Camp Burton](#) [Cascade Meadows](#) [Camp Ross Point](#) So if you're up for an adventure to visit another state for summer camp, you would have additional choices!

According to Executive Minister Avilesbernal, each of the Evergreen camps has a list of its member churches. Similar to Calvary, some churches have long standing relationships with specific camps and that flows more easily. The summer camp schedule is worked out by the camp director and the camp's board. AE does their best to have church participation at the board level at camps. However, there is not a formal process though the region serves as a connecting bridge. For example, camp Burton had a 3 day retreat for children and youth from refugee/immigrant families. That retreat came as a response to a need discovered in the community. In general AE works to make connections between our camps and the churches as much as possible, and the camps are fairly good at taking it from there.

19. Does the ABCEA have their own statement of inclusion?

Evergreen does not have a statement either way. Some churches in their Association are Welcoming and Affirming and some are not. They leave it up to the individual churches to decide and the other churches covenant to respect the individual churches' decisions. This is a key point as we could become part of a region that still has quite a bit of theological diversity, and potentially more ethnic diversity.

20. How might an affiliation change impact our relationship with New Hope?

While the ABCRM region is what brought our two churches together, our relationship is now on its own path, so we will indeed continue working together as two fellow ABCUSA churches. In addition, Calvary staff and members would still be welcome to attend ABRCM regional gatherings, just not as voting members or delegates, so would have the opportunity to network with New Hope leadership at these events as they do now. And, it's quite possible there will be more participation with the ABCEA, as for one, a lot of their gatherings are done via Zoom, and with a new association, this could spark new interest and attendance.

21. What is Council's recommendation?

Council has reached the point where they feel it is important to obtain the congregation's guidance about our future direction. They maintain a neutral position as they await congregational discernment.

22. Wouldn't it be simpler to send candidates for ordination who will not have their ordination recognized by the ABCRM to another Evergreen affiliated

church such as First Baptist, than it would be to change our church’s regional affiliation?

Certainly, members of another Evergreen affiliated church may be ordained according to their local church process. However, the question of ordination at Calvary is for those people who are members of *Calvary*, not members of another church. If a member of Calvary feels called to be ordained, we want to be able to support them in that journey through the process we have in place. Ordination is the responsibility (and privilege) of the local church; it is not something that we can ask other churches to do for us. Put simply, while a person may always choose to leave our church and join another church for any reason, requiring members to make that decision because of their desire to pursue ordination is not being “Open to All, Closed to None.” Additionally, while ABCRM’s Statement on Homosexuality has direct implications for ordination, it is also important for the congregation to think about the bigger question of how ABCRM’s statement aligns (or does not align) with Calvary’s inclusion statement and what it means to the members and leaders in our church that we are affiliated with a region that does not allow all people to participate fully and equally as they are created and called. This affects people in the LGBTQ+ community as well as allies to this community, including our current pastors. We are asking them to live with an incongruence in their ethical and theological values.

23. What is the transition process, or is there a transition process?

The transition will involve honoring the relationship and work we have had with the ABCRM, then being welcomed as a church into the Evergreen Association. Please note that Rev. Van Ostran has indicated that Calvary members could still serve on ABCRM committees, so there wouldn’t need to be any disconnect with those roles, should folks desire to remain in them. Calvary would continue to give their budgeted amount to the ABCUSA, and they would give a portion (70%) back to the region Calvary is affiliated with. The change will not impact Calvary’s budget, unless Calvary wants to give specifically to ABCRM in addition to ABCUSA. If Calvary votes to change affiliation to Evergreen, Pastor Anne would write a letter to the board of the ABCRM signed by her and Co-Moderators. Rev. Avilesbernal has explained the transition process as follows, which would occur after informing him of Calvary’s vote to join Evergreen:

1. We receive a request, and I check in with the church to ask which caucus they feel they fit best or would like to work with. Once I have their answer I pass the request on to the appropriate caucus.
2. The caucus representatives then get in touch with the assigned contact person from the church to get to know them and chat a little more about the church and

why they would like to fellowship with us. This step begins the process of congregational support as well. Each church that joins our region gets a “sponsor” congregation. The aim is to provide another perspective from which to hear about and learn how life is carried out in the region.

3. The Caucus representatives then bring their recommendation for affirmation to the very next association meeting for discussion and affirmation from the other caucuses. Other spaces might call this a vote, but we see it more as our mutual commitment to inclusion and respect with each other. It is of outmost importance that a caucus does not make a choice this important without first sharing their desire to do so with the family. The caucus bringing the church is not asking for approval but communal affirmation and welcome from the other important parts of the family.
4. Once the church has been affirmed by all caucuses they are then welcomed into the regional family and receive official notice as well as a membership certificate.
5. We welcome the church officially at our following annual gathering but the church is considered a full member from the associational meeting at which they were affirmed.

I do need to add the assumptions that go with this process when a church is coming from another region.

- We expect the executive minister to have considerable discussions with the church prior to their sending their request to join.
- These discussions include encouragement to do the best they can to mend their relationship with their current region.
- They should also include an exploration of the reason for leaving another region to join us as well as expected support needed by the church. I say expected support because we know this is a significant choice that comes with much loss and very real pain. Of course, at times, there is also relief and a sense of renewed freedom at which point we also encourage a process of graceful reflection regarding the region that has been left. This reflection is important because we value, nurture and encourage diversity, especially that with which we do not agree.

24. Will we lose members over this change?

We certainly hope not. We trust that this process, information, transparency, and emphasis on loving inclusiveness will reassure those who may be struggling with this decision. We honor that change can be difficult and that there are emotions, connections, relationships and history in our current affiliation. We hope that the fact that we as a congregation are still welcome to participate in ABCRM

functions, and to continue having collaborations and relationships with them, will allay some of the concerns that may be driving consideration of a possible decision to leave Calvary. It would be important to remember that in the spirit of being Baptist, even with a change of regional affiliation, we can still work together, as churches, and as regions, and as the national collective of ABCUSA in the work and calling of Christian and Baptist service.

25. What are the financial consequences? What do we gain or lose financially by going to Evergreen? Would we be able to sustain our programs? Yes, we will be able to sustain programming. Our programs are paid for by our congregations' donations to Calvary's budget every year. We do not receive operational funding from ABCRM, nor would we receive operational funding from ABCEA. We do receive small grants through the Region for education and projects (often from closed church foundations), and we expect there could be similar opportunities with Evergreen.

26. What about the Black Forest camp sale money at ABCRM?

The interest from that money is used to sustain the ABCRM region – staff, programs, scholarships, camps, etc. The money is not distributed to churches, nor is the interest used to fund church operating expenses.

27. What is the budget of the Evergreen Association? How does this compare to the budget of the ABCRM?

According to Executive Minister Avilesbernal, the current operating budget (2021) is \$339,220.31 with an expected income of \$342,827.12. This does include yield from some endowments designated to use for ministry. ABCEA does not draw from their principals. Additionally, they have two endowments they do not include in their operating budget that are used for new church initiatives and continuing ed support.

1. New church initiatives/continuing education: We granted \$100,000.00 from this fund in 2020 as Covid support for our churches.
2. Building bridges fund: This is a new fund that is meant as an incubator for innovative and creative ministries meant to help churches revitalize. As of now this fund has \$1.3 million and we expect it to be at \$3 to \$3.5 million by the time it really gets going in the 4th quarter of 2022 or beginning of 2023.

Lastly we have a small (for now) fund that is to support clergy abuse education and competency for our churches clergy and staff as well as funds to support victims of abuse. We have recently granted one year of counseling to a victim who was abused before we existed as a region and the church has since closed, but they did leave a gift to EBA.

ABCRM's 2021 operating budget is: \$1,073,250. 70% of Calvary's undesignated amount for ABCUSA comes back to the region. For 2021 it's \$4,200. (70% of \$6,000). That's less than 0.4% of the region's \$1,118,000 projection for 2021 income. Please keep in mind that the sale of Black Forest gives ABCRM a significant budget boost, but Evergreen also has several endowment funds and appears to be doing quite a bit with the resources they have and is also building their resources well for a region that has only been in existence for 20 years. For ABCRM, about 80% of income comes from interest on the Black Forest proceeds. The major expense items are Administration (about 50%) and Region Support (14%). Budget size isn't a key factor since the regions have different numbers of churches and different needs...

28. What other churches in Colorado are Evergreen affiliated?

First Baptist Church of Denver, where our former Senior Pastor, Brian Henderson, is Senior Pastor.

29. Can we dually align with the Alliance of Baptists, instead of changing ABC regions?

Yes, that is a possibility. However, the Alliance of Baptists is a grouping of all types of Baptists, not just one like American Baptists. So when this issue was brought to council, the consensus was to "dig in" to our American Baptist identity, and move forward with possibilities within the ABCUSA. Also, getting a candidate for ordination recognized with the Alliance wouldn't get them recognized with ABCUSA, which is the goal, as ordinands working with Calvary are intending to work within the ABCUSA community.

30. What if I can't afford to travel to gatherings with Evergreen since churches are more spread out and more events might be held out of state?

There is always a Zoom option with Evergreen. However, if someone desires to be at an Evergreen event in person, we have the ability to commit to support those travel arrangements and costs.

31. What is the participation of Calvary members with ABCRM activities?

Currently, there are 4 people involved in ABCRM committees from Calvary. Based on Executive Minister Steve Van Ostran's commitment, these individuals will be able to continue in their current roles if they so desire, should Calvary move to Evergreen. Other than these folks, it is usually just Pastor Anne and one or two other Calvary members who attend Annual Gatherings. If the Gathering is out of town (not in Denver), Pastor Anne has often been the only person to attend (in her memory) except for when Bill Warren was the president and when Mason Brown and John Pipe were living. To Anne's knowledge she is the only CBC person

that registered for ABC-USA's biennial this June and she is the only one registered for ABCRM's gathering in September (based on the fact that others have not requested to be delegates for Calvary). Anne tends to attend any regional event that she can and/or is involved in whatever ways she's asked to participate. So Anne is the most involved person with the region. In summary, not many people are involved, and even when events are in Denver – just a handful or less of Calvary members have attended. Anne always encourages co-moderators to attend – but often they cannot because of work or family commitments.

32. Are there any issues or conflicts that Evergreen is struggling with?

Executive Minister Avilesbernal has shared with the discernment team a response to this question: "There are always pressing issues of various natures in active regional life. Having said that, one of our pressing issues now is the question of how to get our ethnic caucuses to foster deeper relationships beyond their own caucus boundaries. This is part of our communal response to various incidents around diversity in a few of our churches. It is clear some of our churches are struggling in the transition from wanting to be a diverse congregation that embraces all to actually living that out. For example, we have one church beginning its pastoral search and during one of their exploratory sessions somebody wondered out loud if the church was ready to have a person of color as their senior pastor, even though they have one in their pastoral staff now. We are also living with the pain of our political divide as a country." Executive Minister Avilesbernal also shared that one way the region can tell what they're struggling with is by knowledge of the workshops they have at their annual meetings. They are generally drafted from requests from churches. Those requests are often the results of struggles ABCEA churches are having, and that often those workshops turn into sacred conversations. You can see ABCEA workshops from this year here: [Annual Meeting 2021 \(ea-abc.org\)](https://www.ea-abc.org/annual-meeting-2021)

33. Might Calvary have second thoughts in the future after having changed to Evergreen?

What if's are difficult to predict. But thorough research, our current discernment, and a 5-year history of discussion on this matter before bringing it to the congregation is revealing that being affiliated with Evergreen is a sound option, should the congregation vote to approve. Calvary could just as easily have second thoughts about staying with ABCRM in the future. Neither decision is irrevocable.

34. Will leaving the ABCRM have a negative impact on the financial status of the ABCRM? With respect to impact on ABCRM finances, we are one of 80 churches in the region. It does not appear that there would be a significant impact either way. Also see above question about the financial status of the

ABCEA and mission giving.

35. What is the impact on staff and members of Calvary if we vote to stay with ABCRM?

As is the case currently, there will not be an equal process for all ordination candidates seeking ordination at Calvary. In addition, candidates would have to go through extra steps to be ordained, and/or to find employment/placement. Furthermore, we could continue to lose potential candidates who simply choose not to be ordained through Calvary or ABCRM, due to the statement the ABCRM holds. While we can find ways to accommodate and work with candidates who do choose Calvary, a great deal of this work falls on our pastors, costing time and effort. While our staff is willing to invest this time, and is honored to be part of a rewarding process in light of the overall importance of a calling from God these candidates are following, staying with the ABCRM places an unnecessary burden on pastors and candidates. Staff and council will continue to have to explain ABCRM's statement, which contradicts Calvary's values and essentially says that our region does not see these candidates fully for their gifts, rationalizing this to Calvary's membership and potential membership, especially those seeking ordination and those in the LGBTQ+ community. Staff and members will continue, as in the past 5 years, to encourage change within the ABCRM. However, it has been made clear that the Statement will stand and that the region does not intend to revisit its position in the near future. In addition, this statement is less about ordination candidates and more about overall inclusivity and the Baptist freedom of church autonomy, and an effort to be authentic in living out our "Open to all; Closed to none" values. Please also refer back to question #22 as part of how staying with the ABCRM will impact staff and members of Calvary.

36. It appears that some of Calvary's LGBTQ+ community members have distanced themselves from this conversation and their voices haven't been present in recent discussions. Can you comment on this?

Pastor Morgan spoke about this concern when it was raised during the September 19 congregational meeting, indicating that some LGBTQ+ members of Calvary have distanced themselves from the discussion to protect the relationships they value with other Calvary members. Rick Breitenbecher, Calvary Council co-moderator, has actually been heavily involved in this process, and responded at the meeting as well, saying, "Mine's going to be one of those voices... We obviously have other LGBTQ members both on staff and in the congregation, in the choir. There's not going to be anyone of the LGBTQ community who is affiliated with Calvary that isn't going to feel something pretty strong about this statement on human sexuality and how unfair it is to set a second class of citizenship, so to speak, for those of us that are in that community. It isn't fair, and I don't think it aligns with Calvary's values. If you're Open to All, Closed to

None, but by the way, here's a list of things you can't do because you're gay, that doesn't square." It would be important to note as well that we have had ordination candidates from the LGBTQ+ community who have been a central part of the discussion, and are leading the way.

37. I'd like to know more about the consensus model, can you please explain?

According to Rev. Doug, Evergreen holds a consensus driven model for discussing any policy and topic. This structure allows sacred conversations moderated by mutual engagement guidelines, staying on task with the matter at hand, holding the value of respect, understanding boundaries, and being deliberate about engaging in difficult questions and conversations. All caucuses have representation, including the executive committee. This system is always pushing power to be fairly distributed. Evergreen has three steps to any decision making. One, all gather together and hear the topic to discuss at the same time and space. Then they separate into their own caucuses to discuss. Then they come back together and every caucus reports their findings/opinions. It is not until then that they begin the process of deciding what option to take. This allows a broad perspective of opinion. The consensus model, as opposed to "Roberts Rules of Order," is a deliberate process that allows each person to have access to saying what they wish to say, taking into account differences in personality and culture, etc. It does make the process slower, but it also makes it more sustainable, because people have more buy-in at the end of the exploration process. Quorum is not number of people and churches. It is rather presence of diversity. If Evergreen does not have all of their diversity present at a meeting, they do not have a quorum, and they cannot make any choice that is binding. This represents radical Christianity and justice. Going by number of people or number of churches would result in unbalanced decisions. All caucuses are represented, and each one gets two votes, regardless of numbers of members or churches, etc. The churches are where the power lies as long as they are involved, and it requires involvement from the churches. It also means that because every committee created needs representation from all caucuses, we have to have people power in order to carry out any tasks. Also the quarterly meetings are essential because of our choice-making process and needing church involvement. In sum, the consensus model is a way to ensure that more voices are heard "at the table" and that those voices are given equal weight and consideration.

38. I have more questions, who can I ask, and how?

Feel free to approach the members of the discernment team, and if you want to ask an anonymous question, please send them to:

DiscernmentTeam@calvarydenver.org. The discernment team members are the only people who will have access to this email box, and they will respect your anonymity should they use your question and answer in the FAQ's or other communications.

You may also ask questions of Calvary staff or church council.

39. What opportunities are there to learn more about this issue?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT A POSSIBLE CHANGE IN ABCUSA REGION AFFILIATION	
Congregational in-person meetings and discussions after church services	August 22 and September 19 – Discernment Team members will present information on Evergreen’s structure, policies, and operations, and answer questions. The August 22 meeting will be recorded and posted on the CBC website Discernment Team page.
E-News	Periodic updates will be provided in the E-News
Tuesday Zoom meetings	Guest speakers will talk about Evergreen and ABCRM, as follows: September 14 – Rev. Doug Avilesbernal – Evergreen Association. September 21 – Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran – ABCRM
Information page on Calvary Website	This page will be a source of information about the history of the issue, what has been done to try to reach a compromise with ABCRM, and everything you might want to know about Evergreen. Recordings will also be available of Zoom sessions.
FAQ’s on the information page	This will start with some basic questions/answers that we expect everyone will want to know about, and be expanded as other questions arise during the course of our discussion.
Question “Box”	An email account has been set up (DiscernmentTeam@calvarydenver.org) where congregational members can ask questions confidentially. This account will only be accessible by Discernment Team members. Your questions and the answers may be posted generically in the FAQ, but they will not be attributed to you.