

Addendum to Minutes of Council Meeting
July 17, 2019

Changing ABC-USA Regions and/or Dual Affiliation with ABC-USA and the Alliance of Baptists

Calvary is an American Baptist (ABC-USA) congregation affiliated with the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountain (ABCRM) region. As a Baptist congregation, Calvary has autonomy as a local church in terms of what we believe and how we are structured, however it is our regional affiliation that allows us to be a part of the ABC-USA.

The Ministerial Leadership Committee (MLC) of the ABCRM is the regional body that oversees the ordination process when a church has an ordination candidate. Because of the ABCRM's "statement on homosexuality" the MLC will not review any applications of candidates who identify as LGBTQIA+. Theologically this is conflict with Calvary's inclusion statement which reads, "*Calvary welcomes and affirms all people as children of God from every cultural and religious background, sexual orientation, family composition, physical and mental ability, economic means, race, age and gender.*" This leaves many ordination candidates at Calvary without a clear path to ordination in the ABC-USA. In addition, as Calvary seeks to be *Open to All Closed to None*, there is a broader question of whether we maintain a partnership with a region that does not affirm all of the members of our congregation.

Calvary appreciates our long-held partnership with ABCRM and has pursued multiple ideas for solutions with ABCRM and ABC-USA over the past few years, but we have been unsuccessful in resolution.

There are alternative options for Calvary to maintain our ABC-USA identity and be faithful to our theology and beliefs. Currently, it is not structurally possible to dually align within ABC-USA with two regions, but we can change to an "open and affirming region" such as the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches in the Northwest. In this first option Calvary would maintain our sole identity as an American Baptist congregation. Another option would be to maintain our affiliation with ABCRM, and then add an additional Baptist affiliation such as the Alliance of Baptists, which would allow our church to engage with Baptist partners who are open and affirming and give us a pathway for ordination candidates, albeit not within the ABC-USA. The latter option does not resolve the difference in theological belief with ABCRM, but it does allow Calvary to have a broader Baptist affiliation that affirms all of our members. In this second option, Calvary would be both an American Baptist congregation and an Alliance of Baptist congregation.

The attached handout gives more information about these alternatives and options. Council has been asked to prayerfully consider these options and carefully review the handout. Any decision Calvary makes about our affiliation would be a congregational discussion, and in the case of a change or addition, would require a congregational vote.