

Calvary Reflects on Virtual Ministry



Monday Night Pub meets virtually.

By Rev. Alice Horner Nelson

As we approach the year-mark of this pandemic, we reflect on what a year it has been. When we first moved worship and programs online in March, I don't think any of us could have predicted that we would be an online church for almost a year.

This time of pandemic has changed us all, probably in ways we aren't aware of yet. Our idea of what church is has changed. Before this pandemic began, we may have considered "church" to be anything that happened on our campus.

I made a list recently of some of the ways we have made ministry happen during this time:

- •Virtual worship services (traditional and The Gathering)
- ·Parking lot worship services
- ·Virtual photo and video "parades" during traditional worship (Easter Garden, Pentecost, Gathering Sunday, Commitment Sunday)
- ·Delivery of Calvary lawn signs
- •Student Graduation Parade

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Home for the Holidays: Ministry Behind-the-Scenes

By Rev. Morgan C. Fletcher

In September as it became clearer that we would not be approved for large gatherings due to Covid-19 safety measures, and that many in our congregation had expressed a desire to attend services or gatherings virtually until things were given a confident clear from health officials, I had this idea start to percolate. The idea was around how we could bring a bit of Calvary to people's homes for the holidays.

As I brought the idea up at Staff Gathering and people resonated with the idea, we all contributed to the details of what would be included. David had the idea for a digital caroling book and audio files of the carols. Alice found the 30 days of thankfulness material from Vibrant Church Communications. I had the idea originally to give out mugs at our November parking lot service but when that was cancelled, we needed a mailed options and Lori had the idea to do Calvary face masks. The Men's Group had already had the No Food Thanksgiving Breakfast in the works and graciously added it to our CHFTH offerings. Ms. Angela is always finding ways to connect with our families with young children and November and

December have been no different - she had bags for them both months. Mary has ensured that our VIPS have a delicious treat regularly and made tasty chocolate covered pretzels for them in November.



Cindy & Ken DeHate show off their masks.

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Pets During the Pandemic

by Pat Hagen



Henry (pictured left) has wanted a since dog was five. His wish came true during Covid 19. Amanda. his mom, said it seemed like a great time to adopt Mac Glascow Paddington, a 3 month old Havanese puppy. Henry, now 11, says "Mac

is the sweetest and cutpuppy. est We are sharing him with Grandad and it means that we get to spend more time with my Grandad, which I love." Charlie, age 8 (pictured left) adds "He's so cute and so fun to play with! And it's

just so adorable how he walks! It looks like he bounds when he walks. He especially likes playing ball and tug of war. I love him!" Even Abby, age 2, seems to enjoy having the puppy around, who likes sitting in her Minnie Mouse chair. Hypo-allergenic, potty trained, and sleeping through the night, Mac has been a great addition to the Stanley family.

The old adage about dogs being a "man's best friend" is truer than ever today during the Covid 19 Pandemic. According to PetPoint, a software program shared nationally by 1200 shelters, fostering and adoptions of pets is up 700% over last year. WalMart is even offering pet insurance as animal adoptions soar.

As our social and work lives have narrowed drastically, a pet can improve your mental and physical health. The benefits of pet ownership, per US News and World Report, include:

- 1) companionship
- 2) routine
- 3) providing purpose
- 4) opportunity for exercise and reducing blood pressure
- 5) mental stimulation which can ward off depression and anxiety.

Joey, a 5 month old Border Collie Aussie mix, now calls the Bruce and Becky Whitaker household home. But finding Joey wasn't easy says Bruce, who found her on NextDoor. Acting quickly, Bruce and Becky brought home the puppy about two months ago and their lifestyle has changed. "Puppies won't let you sleep in" says Bruce. And the family who was already walking a lot is now walking even more. Joey has provided fun (even though he's now three times the size he was) and is a "blessing" according to the Whitakers.

Even if you've had Fluffy or Spot for years, their presence can be a calming influence during this uncertain time. The Peltons recently lost their beloved Westin, a 12 year old Golden Retriever they adopted as a puppy from Golden Retrievers of the Rockies. Lynda says "During quarantine our beloved Westin gave us such comfort and love. I started my day with his paw on my leg as I drank my coffee and watched the Today show." Lynda spent most of April in Ft. Collins dealing with the premature birth of her grandson, the uncertainty of the NICU and Covid 19.

"Returning home it was such a comfort to have him by my side for a little peace and quiet. I can't explain how attentive he was and tolerant of my tears and fears. He seemed to sense what was happening to our world. His companionship was invaluable during the shutdown."

Unfortunately during the summer, Westin start-

Pretzels & Prayers: Ministry to our VIPs

by Rev. Mary Hulst

Pastor Emerita & Pastoral Associate

In a pandemic the isolation experienced for so many is great. Distances that separate many in our congregation are far greater than 6 feet. During these months, it has been pure delight for me to drop off a small treat to each of our VIPs (Very Inspiring People) on a number of occasions. The November drop off gift was a bag of frosted pretzels. Also included were "stress balls" with Calvary's logo.

Some sources claim the pretzel first appeared back in 610 AD, when a monk in Italy baked strips of dough and folded them into a criss-cross shape as a reward for those of his students who had

learned their prayers. The

pretzel, representing arms crossed over the upper body, became a symbol for a prayer posture. My gift was a reminder to each VIP of the prayers that I and all of Calvary, regularly say for them.

Both the preparation and the delivery were great fun and I was able to visit with many face to face. (at a distance, of course)

PRETZEL STATS:

Individually Hand dipped pretzels in Ghiardelli White Chocolate - 1050 pretzels (takes a bit of time to let the chocolate drip off of each pretzel as it is dipped:)

- Delivery stops all over Metro Denver 39
- People represented in those stops 50
 - Miles on my little white Honda Civic-driven over parts of three days - 192.7 miles
 - Hours to reach all places of delivery - 14
 - Love and thanksgiving shared - a great abundance

Left: Rev. Mary Hulst shows her pretzel goodie bags delivered in person to her VIPs. She couldn't do it without her partner and driver, Jack Hulst!





Pets, continued



ed slowing down and losing weight. Lynda concludes, "Westin went to doggie heaven last week. He was so loved and will be missed. He gave us great comfort during some very difficult days and brought us great joy. We were not sure if we rescued him or he rescued us but I am sure dogs are gifts from God."

Being a cat owner, I concur with Lynda and would add all pets to that sentiment. Our Shadow, a 15 year old feline, has quietly been observing and supporting us during this time with an unexpected visit or meow to say hello. As Collete wrote, "Our perfect companions never have fewer than four feet."

A Letter from Dr. David Farwig

Hello Calvary!

It's been an such an extraordinary year – primarily an extraordinarily difficult, challenging, incredibly frustrating and sad year. But, also one where hearts and minds were deeply committed to love and help one another through the tough times. It's amazing to see the breadth of people's behaviors when things get tough.

You, dear Calvary, have shown such resolve to put love into action, and it has inspired and uplifted me every day, even when I was so sick with COVID in March! I have to say, I don't think I have experienced deeper gratitude anytime in my life than throughout this terrible year, simply because people and communities like you have demonstrated what it really means to "love thy neighbor."

As for our music ministry- yes, it was hit hard, and I have to hand it to our amazing Calvary Choir, who has continued to uphold its identity through almost a year of not singing together. In our bi-weekly Zoom meetings we have started to gather simply to be together. Trying to do anything musical or vocal on Zoom is just too frustrating. So, the last few times we have met, we've focused on catching up and answering a particular "Life Question" like, "What experience in your life brought you to music?" or "What is your favorite hymn?" These have been especially enriching for us because, even when we were meeting to sing together, we often worked so hard on



Calvary Choir has a biweekly Zoom call.

the music and we didn't have time to share these kinds of things. It's been really wonderful to learn about and get to know the beautiful people in our choir better.

One of my goals throughout this pandemic has been to bring in the excellent talent from our congregation. I felt that seeing and hearing our own Calvary musicians in virtual worship was essential to keeping a connection, rather than hiring pros who we don't even know. The pros I have brought in have been ones who have been with us before, or who have a personal connection to me. But seeing and hearing our very own is what brings us more together, whether it be singing, recorder playing, drums, trumpet, hand bells, or even past videos of piano and organ (shout out to Edith Rowell and Charlotte Million!). And, of course, Denise never fails to bring us amazing organ and piano work - I can't tell you how grateful I am for her, and all our wonderful musicians who have so generously offered their time and talent. Thank you!

I have been happy to continue to improve my guitar skills – an opportunity that I may not have had (at least at this level of intensity) if not for the pandemic and need for virtual leading of hymns and carols. It has been a joy for me personally to dive back into something I hadn't really done since I was in high school (I used to play lead and rhythm guitar in a rock band back then). Thank you for putting up with me through this, even though my hope is that you enjoy the guitar in our services and hymn requests.

Speaking of hymn requests, that has been another amazing opportunity for me and for our congregation in this virtual environment. Thank you for all your interest. I will continue to do this for as long as you like, so feel free to keep requesting.

Thank you, Calvary, for all you do and for all your support. You are indeed the love of God in action, and I couldn't be more happy to be part of your community.

Here's wishing you all continued safety, good health, peace and joy this Christmas season!

An Update from Pastor Morgan C. Fletcher: Faith Formation Listening Sessions

The Faith Formation Ministry Team has done a fantastic job of holding listening session with all of our Church School leaders over the past three months. With each of these listening sessions we have gleaned the mission and vision for what our Church School ministry means to these leaders and how we can adjust, grow, and explore ways of living out this mission and vision in the coming years.

At our November work session with our adult church school leaders for both small groups and Sunday morning classes we began developing key learning experiences. These learning experiences will be what help us guide class norms, content, and avenues for evaluation. As we share these we want people to know these are living learning experiences - meaning as we lean into them we will be encouraging ourselves to adjust, remove, or add to them as needed.

Here are the church adult church school learning experiences:

Broad base study - allowing people to explore God, life, and humanity through wisdom found in books, videos, and Scripture.

Spiritual Challenge - exploring and developing spiritual practices that allow us to grow, be challenged, and lean beyond one's comfort zone to be equipped to get through life by being connected to God in all of these practices.

Faith Practices - such as prayer, fellowship, and discipleship are core to living through the various seasons of life and allowing ourselves to see ourselves on a journey rather than seeking a destination. These practices allow us to connect the insights of Scripture to what we are seeing in society and culture.

Applying Faith - How to use one's faith to deal with today's problems and injustices in a practical and useful way.

Building & Sustaining Relationships - As we gather for study, practice, or connection we work to care for each other, work to see each other for who we are, develop space to be vulnerable, and strive to invest in these relationships beyond a gathering or class time. We are able to do this as we dedicate our day to day to our relationship with God - it is our anchor for healthy relationships with ourselves and with others.

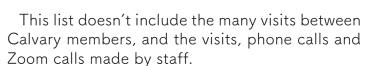
Intentional Welcome - Always keeping a space at the table so that people who are new to any class, being mindful to make our spaces available to those who wish to join, and ensuring we continually challenge ourselves to ask the question, who isn't here that needs to be here.

Many thanks to all of our church school leaders of all ages! And continued thanks to our Faith Formation Ministry Team for beginning at the start of the pandemic and still leaning in to explore how we can support all areas of faith formation at Calvary. Keep an eye out throughout 2021 for further work around honing our mission and vision of our church school ministries at Calvary.

-Pastor Morgan Caruthers Fletcher

Virtual Ministry Impact, continued

- ·Tuesday Midweek Gathering
- ·Virtual Coffee Hour
- Calvary Choir biweekly Zoom meetings
- •Rev. Mary Hulst delivered homemade goodies in-person to our VIPs
- •Fundraising for Family Promise families to be hosted in hotels
- ·Commitment Card drive-thru
- •Men's Group Virtual Thanksgiving program
- •Calvary Home for the Holidays masks sent in the mail, Caroling You-Tube video with Dr. David Farwig
- Virtual Giving Tree
- •Tree of Hope & Remembrance
- ·Virtual Christmas Pageant
- ·Virtual Christmas Card



Before this pandemic, Calvary staff didn't have much experience with video editing. But overnight, it became a skill that needed to be learned. Very quickly, having a decent camera and microphone became essential. Calvary's Google Drive became a hub for worship planning. Damon Scalfaro was the only one with video editing experience with a program called PowerDirector. Now, all three pastors and Rev. Matt Nelson know how to compile worship and church program videos.

For some, virtual worship meets their needs during this time.

Amy Kehew was surprised at how quickly we got used to virtual worship: "The biggest surprise is how quickly it seems that we have 'adapted' to it. It's hard to believe that we have been doing worship this way for nine months! And even though it's not the way we'd like to worship, it's definitely way better than doing nothing, and far and above what most churches have been doing. It was difficult at first for me to come to terms with the feeling of 'Calvary withdrawal,' and I'm surprised about how much that has now receded. This way of doing things is certainly not completely ideal or even satisfactory, but because of the dedication and caring of all of the church leaders, we



Trivia Night at Midweek Gathering

are being kept informed, affirmed, and included. That's huge."

Margie Jonell said, "I have been surprised that virtual worship feels worshipful! I do miss seeing and touching my friends at church, but seeing them on screen makes me feel like I have "seen" them!"

Deborah Carlson and Tom Madden are impressed by the quality of virtual worship: "The services and meditations are meaningful and powerful and seem to be aimed at us as individuals. There is a sense of realism and not some slick production when Molly, Mary Todd or Buster make cameo appearances. We think the biggest surprise is seeing in real time how far Calvary has come during this time. The video production has been fantastic!"

A theme of this pandemic has been the tension between gratitude and grief. These past months have certainly highlighted those things that we took for granted before, but we also carry a heavy grief of missing our in-person connections.

Personally, I felt this grief in a strong way on Christmas Eve. Instead of being with my church family all day, getting hugs and Christmas well wishes, I was on my couch alone. Watching our stellar Christmas Eve worship video just couldn't replace the loss I felt.

Deanna Geldens experienced this kind of grief, too: "I have a big box of paper that I have been shredding for our compost pile. As I came across old church bulletins, I was sad each time I shredded one. I miss sitting next to my Calvary friends

and seeing everyone's faces. I didn't realize how much I took for granted that simple aspect of life. I can't wait until we can all sit together side-by-side in the sanctuary with our bulletins in hand and our voices raised!"

Amy Kehew summed up a 'negative' that almost everyone mentioned in their comments to me. "The most outstanding negative," Amy says, "is being unable to be with each other experiencing hugs, handshakes, singing together, praying together, seeing smiles, and just being in the building itself - a comforting, inspiring, energizing, authentic, and peaceful place to be. I miss that more than I can express."

For many Calvaryites, the biggest thing they miss is being together in a physical space. John Kron grieves "not being together in person, hugging, sitting in our beautiful sanctuary, not even seeing the remodeled chapel in person, not hearing and feeling the organ- my computer speaker does not do justice!"

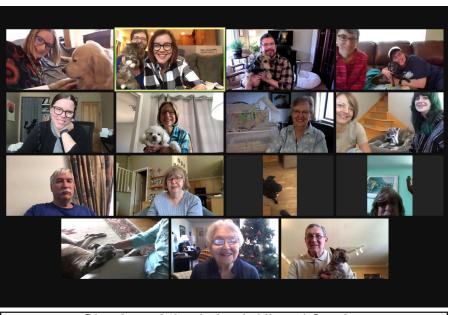
However John is surprised at the depth a virtual service can provide. He says, "what a rich and fulfilling, AND creative experience a taped video worship service can be!"

Becky Porter is surprised by how many people watch the services, but struggles that "on this virtual platform it's very impersonal." She misses worship being live and in the sanctuary.

Marie Dykes is grateful for "consistent, reliable opportunities to see, hear and connect through online worship and Zoom chats. It helps continue the feeling of belonging and care as much as is virtually possible. The effort by staff and all to bring the best has been very meaningful, and appreciated."

But Marie also acknowledges the shortcomings of virtual ministry- both the lack of personal interaction and the issue of accessibility of virtual services.

"Personal interaction—talking, singing, hugging and more—is what makes 'being the church' both a responsibility as well as a joy. Virtual can't replace the in-person warmth and outreach. I worry that some aren't comfortable in the virtual world and have dropped away quietly."



Blessing of the Animals Virtual Service

The worry of accessibility is a large one for staff. All it takes is one email to malfunction, a loss of internet or a device for a Calvary member to feel disconnected.

For some, being able to worship at any time has allowed more flexibility in family schedules. For Sharon Murphy, she's been able to attend her husband's church as well as Calvary. "I've been spoiled by being able to view the worship services at a convenient time, with consideration of watching the worship services of my husband's church at a time that is convenient for him. I lose a bit of the Calvary connection by sometimes watching at a delayed time, but I gain some connection with Terry."

For our virtual members, digital ministry meant a huge increase in the activities they could participate in. Christine Zeiler who lives in Baltimore said "moving 1700 miles away from Calvary was one of the hardest things I've had to do. I always attended worship online, but when COVID hit there were more possibilities to join with my Calvary family. There was a Tuesday evening gathering where I actually got to talk to my friends. Then I was able to be part of Tuesday Bible study. It's been a blessing while I was sequestered for 9 months."

Norma Wick is impressed with Calvary's ability to learn new technology: "The biggest surprise for me is that people are learning how to electronically connect to one another." But that goes hand in hand with her biggest frustration: when the internet goes down.

Another huge positive for Norma is the exponential increase in the number of people Calvary can reach. "One of the biggest positives is that we can now have people who live outside the Metro Area participate in our church services! My children, who live elsewhere, have been able to visit the virtual services! The amazing creativity of our church staff has been a favorite highlight for me," Norma said.

Creativity is a strong theme of this pandemic, mostly out of necessity. Staff has had to answer questions like, how do we reach folx without seeing them in person? What are their needs? What message do they need to hear and in what format? I often find myself asking, how can I make church announcements interesting? As the famous quote by Jonathan Schattke goes: "Necessity is the mother of invention, it is true, but its father is creativity, and knowledge is the midwife."

Ann Cline said, "the virtual format has inspired amazing creativity, worship has been more alive. Chat comments are nice to see since we can't 'talk' to a person next to us in the pew."

Judy Baumgartner adds that "the feeling of connectedness with pastor during sermon time is wonderful." She particularly highlighted Pastor Anne's sermon about Joseph where she preached from each perspective in the story, wearing a different coat each time.

Brenda Goodman's highlights are many, including Calvary's Virtual Pride video, Anne's sermon, "Hidden in Plain Sight", Morgan's sermon, "The Courage To Retell our Stories" and Alice's sermon, "The Not-So-Little Brilliant Theologian." She says: "I always enjoy the ambience Anne creates for her recorded sermons, Alice's funny and attention keeping ministry of announcements, Morgan's meaningful study opportunities and her seemingly bottomless well of resources, as well as her creative thinking in trying to keep youth connected and 'seen.'"

For Corry Doty, this pandemic has reminded her of the strength of the church community. "The biggest positive is just BEING our church and church family. COVID-19 actually is a plague, but it has not killed our church."

What everyone seems to agree on is the benefit of worshipping in their pajamas. There is "freedom from bad weather by staying cozy at home," Judy Baumgartner says. And as Norma Wick says, "it is nice not to have to dress up for church and I can sit and drink a cup of coffee." I agree, Norma!



tual Christmas card and it grow with ideas from Alice and me. Denise added the music for the Virtual Christmas Card. I loved the VBS material Ms. Angela used this year and kept an eye out on the publishing company and I'm glad I did! Illustrated Ministry is the source for our Advent Devotionals, Ornaments to print, color, and hang, and Virtual Christmas Pageant script and materials. So while I might have been the one behind the scenes executing these ideas or following up on ideas it was the whole staff who brought the Calvary Home for the Holidays offerings to life. This is just one example of how our staff supports one another to provide, what we hope to be, meaningful experiences for you while we can't gather in person. Thanks to Alice, Angela, Anne, David, Denise,

Lori, and Mary for helping make this happen!



Children's Ministry Updates

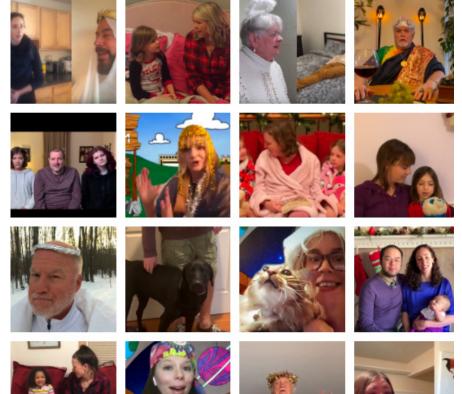
by Angela Leonard, Children's Ministry Coordinator

In December we focused on the Beatitudes Curriculum from Illustrated Ministry which they follow along with a video and curriculum printouts. I like the videos so kids can take a break from the curriculum to write down ideas or color. I love this curriculum. It has a coloring sheet, activities, discussion questions, and review with family.

I put together the Christmas bags for the kids. These have been something fun for the kids to receive to have a bit of fun during the holidays.

The biggest challenge of doing videos for Sunday School and Word for God's Children would be recording myself. Sometimes it is challenging with a little one around, so we do multiple takes of the videos.

A highlight for me was the Calvary Christmas Pageant. If you haven't seen it yet, it is so worth your time. So many of our Calvary kids acted their hearts out and did such a great job! It totally made my Christmas day. I am so glad we have options to be creative and fun during this time. Thank you so much to Pastor Morgan for collecting the video clips and putting them together.





If you'd like a longer list of birthdays, please email Pastor Alice.

January		February		March	
Decarious Chol Wang		Cathy O'Brien	February 01	Walter Rowell	March 01
	January 01	Rosemary White	February 01	William Ponikvar	March 02
Julie Haynie	January 01	Joseline Umulisa	February 02	Gary Johnson	March 03
Mimi Leonard	January 01	Charlie Stanley	February 03	Michelle Mendoza	March 05
Abraham Tuom	January 01	Doug Hulst	February 06	Pat Crile	March 06
, ,		Bobslyn Kidd-Spend	ce	Karen Folgate	March 07
Fred Michel	January 02		February 07	Gary Howe	March 07
Brenna Brooks	January 04	Bob Hoffmaster	February 09	Rick Breitenbecher	March 08
Nyakai Tuom	January 04	Dena Stanton	February 10	Vonda Liming	March 08
Debbie Blew	January 07	Kenneth Pinkham	February 12	Deborah Carlson	March 09
Robert Daniel	January 13	lan Davey	February 14	Carly Jo Crile	March 10
Padiet Wang	January 13	Abigail Stanley	February 14	Tobias Yarrington	March 13
Jennifer Jonell	January 14	Pal Wang	February 15	Judith Griswold	March 14
Garrett Pelton	January 16	Sabrina Bish	February 16	Kathy Kron	March 14
Brianna Friend	January 17	Tom Madden	February 17	Patti Thurman	March 14
Timothy Michel	January 17	Royce Nation	February 17	Miciah Davis	March 16
Sarah Brooks	January 20	Ginger Waymire	February 17	Sarah Mather	March 17
Bill Leonard	January 20	Carol Weale	February 17	Natalie Michel	March 17
Derek Michel	January 20	Cassie Kochman	February 18	Jordan Grohskopf	March 18
Heather Michel	January 20	Nancy Chick	February 20	Jimmy Doolittle	March 19
Norma Wick	January 22	Julian Fletcher	February 20	Nancy Johnson	March 23
Rita Berglund	January 23	Nell Nation	February 22	Earlie Delley	March 24
Abraham Conneh	January 23	Robyn Hulst	February 23	Madison Hulst	March 24
Jan Davey	January 24	Michael Jonell	February 24	Rebecca Porter	March 25
Jack Fredericks	January 24	Debbie Honeker	February 26	Carl Ramay	March 25
Kurt Gangloff	January 25	Sebastian Ralston	February 27	Michael Stanley	March 26
Jack Hammon Jahn	January 27	Morgan Fletcher	February 28	Carol Willard	March 26
Gordon Kieft	January 27			Tracy Card	March 27
John Anduri	January 28			Rachel Chang	March 28
Stephan Barry	January 30			Janet Kerlin	March 28
John Goodman	January 31			Farhan Naushad	March 28
				Durelle Walker	March 30

The Adventures of Buster

We've had the joy of seeing Buster's antics after each traditional worship service. Buster is Anne & Damon Scalfaro's stuffed monkey who is a part of the Calvary family.













































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Calvary Baptist Church 6500 E. Girard Ave Denver, CO 80231

Services and events are suspended until further notice. All worship services are on our Youtube channel "Calvary Baptist Church of Denver." If you cannot access them, please contact Pastor Alice (ahornernelson@calvarydenver.

org)
General email:
cbc@calvarydenver.org

Website: www.calvarydenver.org