



# — IN THE — MEANTIME



# CQ

**CALVARY QUARTERLY MAGAZINE**

SUMMER 2020 | JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

## What do you do when it feels like there's *nothing* you can do?

Has anyone else felt this way over the past few months? There's this big bad thing called COVID-19 that has turned our world upside down, taken over much of our lives, filled us with both fear and frustration, and driven us crazy—because there is so much out of our control. There are no quick solutions. It's like we're on a roller coaster for the first time, but there are no handles to hold onto. In some ways we feel shipwrecked on an island, waiting for someone to rescue us.

If we're honest, our current predicament isn't the only time we've felt stuck—stuck in situations where there are a whole lot of questions and not enough answers. Seasons where it seems like “that's just the way it's going to be.” Times when none of the options at our disposal are good ones—Do we run, give up, give in, get angry or resentful?

And, naturally, it's *in the meantime*—while we weather these seasons—that we ask, “Where are you God? If you're really out there, how could you let this happen? Why have you abandoned us when we need you most?”

Folks, what if it's in these “in the meantime” moments that God is closer to us than we ever imagined? What if God has actually been more present than ever over the past few months? What if our ability to see God's hand at work just gets clouded in times like this—clouded by our fears, anxieties, and loss of control?

Here's what I know: God promises God will always show up...*in the meantime*.

What follows are the stories of all God has been up to *in the meantime* through you—our church—and our community over the past months. It is remarkable to see all the ways God has been at work as we've weathered the storm together.

“Nothing will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus”  
Romans 8:38-39



Pastor Hans

# From Calvary's President



"The Lord works in mysterious ways." Hans shared these words with me over the past few months as he has reflected on the irony that the Chief Medical Officer in town would happen to be serving as the president of our church council amid a global pandemic.

While I'm honored, I've reflected on those words in a very different way. Here's what I see: **Even though we've sheltered-in-place and our lives have been restricted in so many ways, it's amazing to see all God has been doing through you over the past several months, Calvary!**

When I think of all you have done for our church family and our community even amid this global pandemic, I can only point to God and say: The Lord works in mysterious ways. Here are a few things God has been doing through you:

- Alomere Hospital invited Calvary and other partners to help produce homemade masks - we needed 4,000 masks and over 20,000+ have been sewn!
- We haven't been able to gather at the church (and won't for the foreseeable future), and yet 1,000's view worship and other content online and on TV. In the last month, on Facebook alone we've had 4,700 people watch an entire service from beginning to end. That doesn't include our website, YouTube, Cable Access viewers and those who tune in on the radio.
- Somehow the Calvary staff found a way for families to pack 1,200 bags of food for our Backpack Attack program while at the same time honoring social distancing, masking and disinfecting!
- We've given \$1,000's in gift cards to families in need through the High School food shelf.
- You are inviting people to join us for worship! People are tuning in for worship from as far away as Chicago and the Iron Range, Florida and Colorado, South Carolina and Leaf Valley!
- A little social distancing hasn't stopped our adult and student Connect Groups from meeting, they've just moved virtual. 100's are connecting online and growing deeper together.
- Through all of this, Innovative Builders continues to construct Calvary's building project on schedule. In fact, one phase of the project—upstairs—is now complete.
- COVID-19 hasn't stopped us from continuing to explore creative ways to partner with other churches, including a partnership with West Moe Lutheran Church that will bring a seminary intern in our midst.
- And, finally, even though we're not passing the plate, we've all continued to support Calvary in really generous ways. Your generosity has given us the confidence and ability to serve our community in a time when the community needs us most.

I could go on and on. I'm so proud of you. I'm proud to be a part of a church that knows the church is so much more than a building—a church that understands that the way we "love our neighbor as ourselves" is by protecting our neighbor. We wash our hands, stay home as often as possible, and mask up!

Humbled and grateful,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Dittberner".

Deb Dittberner, Council President



# People all over are tuning in

## ALBERTA, CANADA

**Beth & Mark Clarstrom - CALGARY, ALBERTA**

*"We have tuned into online worship every Sunday since Palm Sunday. It's our Sunday breakfast thing. With moving so much in recent years, we wanted something familiar and that feels 'home' during social distancing. Plus we wanted to see how long Hans' beard is growing and what sweater he chose to wear!"*



**Nancy & Joel Schroeder - BLAIR, NE**

*"It's been uplifting to see and hear familiar voices from Calvary. We need those powerful, uplifting messages of love to power through these days. God is with us!"*



**Duane Dale - MOSCOW, ID**

*"Thanks so very much for the very moving, highly relevant and thoughtful messages. I'm 73, haven't been to a Sunday service in decades. WOW! Both my wife and I were moved and, yes, we will be tuning in again!"*



**Danny & Megan Nies - WINDSOR, CO**

*"I grew up attending Calvary in Alexandria and my wife and sons were baptized there, so Calvary will always hold a special place in our hearts. We love being able to watch Calvary online and stay connected with our Minnesota church family."*



**Marcene Flaata - MISSION, TX**

*"Although I'm back now for the summer, when I was in Texas I watched worship through Calvary's website. It helped me stay connected to home."*



# How to watch Calvary online!

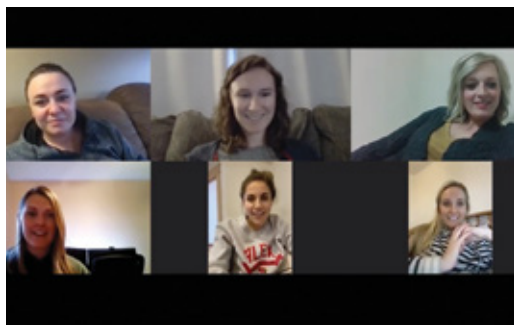




# *In the Meantime...*

## People joining *Virtual Connect Groups*

During the COVID-19 outbreak, we need to protect people by limiting in-person gatherings. Thankfully, technology allows us to connect! From women's Circles, to Elevate student groups, to people who have only ever met online, Calvary Connect Groups are embracing this new digital reality with smiles—and they're managing to deepen their faith along the way!



### **Abby Deterding**

*"Virtual connect group has been something I look forward to each week during this uncertain time. It's been so fun meeting new friends and growing in my faith alongside some awesome women! Don't let this time stop you from connecting, it's really been such a blessing!"*



### **Diane Nelson**

*"I first joined Calvary Elizabeth's Circle nearly 30 years ago. This group of women has shown me the 'Calvary spirit' of welcoming and caring for others, and we've helped each other through difficult times. We typically meet in our homes, but that couldn't happen in April. Some had experience with Zoom, so we gave it a try. Everyone was so excited to see each other the first time we connected online!"*



### **Jim & Jan Pence**

*"As relative newcomers to Calvary, we want to deepen the relationships with church friends we have come to know and not let current circumstances keep us apart. Our original connect group of seventeen is too large to meet virtually, so we divided into two groups and have had terrific responses from everyone."*



### **Mason Huebner**

*"I like connecting with my Elevate group in this way because I get to see everyone at once and it's also a lot of fun. This is a hard time but we are lucky to have technology to connect"*

# A Special Invitation

Just before Easter Sunday, I received a text from my Benson High School classmate, Duane. He is quite an outdoorsman and likes to text us pictures of the beautiful places they go hiking and camping. On a hike a few days before Easter they were going over a bridge and noticed it was made by Contech Bridge Solutions from Carlos. So, he sent us a picture of him on the bridge. I sent him a thank you and said, if you are interested our church is doing an Easter service on the internet. About 10 minutes after Arlis and I watched Calvary's Easter service my cell phone rang and it was Duane calling to thank me for the invite to watch. He and his wife have not been attending church for decades. He was just thrilled about our service and after he called me, he wrote an e-mail to Pastor Hans. He plans to continue watching our online services. I am thankful for the inspiration to invite him (planting a seed). The Holy Spirit did the rest.

Paul Hanson



*Pastor Dahl* Thanks so very much for the very moving, highly relevant and thoughtful message you provided on this special day. I'm 73, haven't been to a Sunday service in decades, having been unsuccessful in finding a church with the right vibe that would facilitate carrying on of the spirit I experienced growing up in Our Redeemer's in Benson so many years ago. Just a couple days ago I was in touch via email with a young at heart old high school buddy of mine (Paul Hanson) who invited me to join your Easter Sunday online service. I decided this morning to 'check it out.' WOW! Both my wife and I were moved by the relevance of your message, as well as the inventive creative way in which you chose your words and analogies and the manner in which it was delivered. It was breathtakingly refreshing; felt like times in church that I have long been without! Kudos to all involved in making this technologically savvy production as well! There was obviously a LOT of time put in on this by many. Thanks to all! After viewing I forwarded it to our adult children and several friends.

As I thought about the decades away from regular church attendance, I thought of how, while not a regular church attendee, I have carried the Lord in my heart in all that I have done... whether in recreation or throughout my career as a speech-language pathologist. While manicuring my yard or out in God's Country (backpacking in the bottom of the Grand Canyon, or fly fishing in nearby mountain lakes or rivers) I many times have caught myself humming 'How Great Thou Art'; a song I so often sang in church and at funerals when younger. Today, given your message and these difficult times, I was reminded of a verse: 'All things work for good for those who believe'. Anyway, that's a much longer than intended 'Thank You', but after calling and thanking Paul for the nudge, I had a need to finish by thanking You! God's speed through these challenging times!

Be Safe, and...Yes, we will be tuning in again...from here in Moscow, Idaho.

Duane Dale





## *In the Meantime...* **Work Advances on** *Building Project*

One would think that the walls of the church are quiet without worship and other gatherings these days. But that is far from reality with the sounds of sledgehammers, drills, saws, and many other tools of construction. Work to expand and renovate our building has gained significant momentum, and we are well into the third and fourth phases of the project. We continue to be within budget and on schedule with the project, despite what feels like a giant pause in our lives over the past few months.

The renovation of the second floor is now complete. A new staff office suite was added for our staff to be together in one space. Two new multipurpose rooms—named the Loft and Lookout—are ready to host groups of many sizes, including kids, students, and adult connect groups.

On the main level, work is well underway to prepare for connecting the addition to the existing building. The new preschool wing is being created to welcome our youngest learners back. The once unused courtyard is transforming from an empty

slab into new restrooms and additional preschool space. And just one look at the facade of the building tells you that much has changed. Each week brings new progress on the exterior that reveals a little more of the end result.

We know many of you are anxious to get in and see the changes, so watch your email or [calvaryalex.org/buildingproject](http://calvaryalex.org/buildingproject) for updates. **It is not safe for anyone to enter the building given the raw state of construction,** so thank you for staying away and being patient during this construction process. Thank you also for your continued generosity to make all this possible. Please continue to pray for the health and safety of our talented team of professionals working on the project. In the meantime, we continue to prepare our space for when we meet again inside its walls!

*-Calvary Construction Communication Team  
Elaine Larson, Rich Lentz, Jay Sieling, Cory Hodgson, Bruce Luehmann, Katie Rentschler, and Wade Cole of ORB Management*



# *In the Meantime...*

## **Care Continues**

Five years ago when I was living in Palm Springs I was diagnosed with cancer. This diagnosis led me to move back to the Cities for a time and then return to where I grew up and raised my children, here in Alexandria. It's been a wonderful blessing to be close to my family during this time. They have cared for me and helped me out. I've been blessed by an amazing doctor here, Dr. Raflares. She has kept me going through this disease. Before Coronavirus it was harder to socialize but I still was able to get out. But since Coronavirus I find myself missing those times to see people, missing my circle, missing quilting, and missing friends stopping by.

## **People have been *generous* with their time and encouragement.**

It's hard for me to stay connected and get out because I am immunocompromised. Yet what has amazed me is how people have reached out to me at this time. People have been generous with their time and encouragement. I've received many phone calls from my Calvary family, cards, devotions, offers to help and prayers. Being positive and trying to keep myself going and busy, interacting with people through calls and letters from church, friends, that's what keeps me going. It's good for the soul. Last week I had another CT scan to see how things were and I'm pleased to say two spots have shrunk and I've been taken off chemo for 9 weeks. I feel fortunate that I have fought it and am still fighting it. I'm blessed with good people and good medical care and I'll keep going.

*Kathy Wheeler*



# In the Meantime... Making Masks

When COVID-19 first hit the United States, the impact was not immediately felt by many in our area. **Nonetheless, Alomere Hospital had a task for the people of Alexandria: sew masks!** On March 20, Calvary put a request for homemade masks on our Facebook page, and people all over the community got to work. The original request was for 200 masks to Alomere, and since then people have donated materials, cut fabric, tracked down elastic, and sewn more than 20,000 masks for the hospital, clinics, care facilities, organizations, and individuals in the Alexandria area!



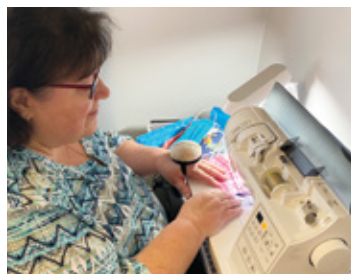
**Teresa Herzog** drove back to MN from CA in late March and stopped at every Joann Fabric she could along the way to buy spools of elastic.

Even those that don't sew could help. Both **Bill Buckner** (pictured) and **Dean Holm** faithfully cut hundreds of strips of elastic.



Community members like **Sandy Susag** (pictured) and **Amy Allen** sewed hundreds of masks in their homes and brought them to the common drop site at Calvary.

**Cindy Yell** worked through the local Facebook group, Helping Hands of Alexandria to offer free masks to any individuals who needed them.



**Joni Jacobson** and Julie Anderson, County Emergency Management Director, coordinated the distribution of thousands of masks to the hospital and community organizations.



## *In the Meantime...*

### **Family Grows Closer While Far Apart**

As we wintered in Florida this year was different from others. We found ourselves sheltering in place and far from our family and home longer than expected. Marilyn and I have moved through this journey called life for well over 80 years, now in our 64th year of marriage. We have been blessed beyond belief! God is so good! He has given us a wonderful family and allowed us to live a very pleasant life. We are thankful for God's grace and His promise of eternal life if we choose to follow Jesus. We have always spent much of our time with our growing family—over 30 people. The opportunities to be together are always special. Life always has some dark, tough spots and ours is no different. But we have always had the Lord on our side guiding us through the storms. Now! Today! Recently! Something seems to have gone terribly wrong in our world!

Where can we turn for the answers to this terrible disease of COVID-19? How can we stay in touch with family when we are told "STAY HOME?" Some may cry out "God, have you forsaken us?"

We choose to place our trust in God! We are fortunate to be able to have Calvary broadcasts live on the internet. We find the bright spots always found in family! Our family phone conversations are longer and more frequent, filled with expressions of love and concern for each other. We share our faith freely. We are fans of Zoom and have regular Happy Hours with 30 of our family together, scattered across the country from Minnesota, South Dakota, Tennessee and Florida. With imagination, gatherings can include hor d'oeuvres. Two hours pass quickly and we feel closely knit and looking forward to that time soon when we can be physically together sharing the times we find to be such an important part of life. We feel blessed to now be safely home in Minnesota.

*Gene Sipe*



*photo taken in 2018*



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9:00am / [www.calvaryalex.org](http://www.calvaryalex.org)  
Facebook, YouTube, KXRA 99.3 Radio  
Charter Cable Channel 181

## DAILY DOSE (MONDAY-FRIDAY)

6:15pm / [www.calvaryalex.org](http://www.calvaryalex.org)  
Facebook, YouTube,  
Charter Cable Channel 181

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