



GROWING IN CHRIST

HISTORY OF CALVARY LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL WISCONSIN SYNOD 1964 – 2004

You plant a seed so that it grows. The tall trees that line our streets and the beautiful flowers that decorate our homes all started as small seeds.

40 years ago God planted a seed in North Dallas called Calvary Lutheran Church. During those 40 years Calvary has experienced Growing In Christ. Today it stands as a beautiful branch of the vine, Jesus Christ.

Growing in Christ – that is the theme of this booklet, just as it has been the theme that has driven the entire history of Calvary Lutheran Church and School. We pray that the seed planted and nurtured by God’s grace 40 years ago will still be growing 40 years from now.

The Germinating Seed

1962 – 1964

Although the seed of Calvary Lutheran Church would not be formally planted until February of 1964, already as early as 1962 the seed was germinating. On November 5, 1962, a group of faithful Christians met in Dallas with officials of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) to discuss the possibility of establishing a WELS mission. The people who attended that November meeting were drawn together by the unseen hand of the Lord. In August 1962, Ruth Hanson, of Oak Cliff, persuaded by her sister, Mrs. Joseph Lakas, wrote to President Oscar Naumann, of the Wisconsin Synod.



The Lakas family and Miss Hanson were hoping that the WELS would see fit to begin a church in the Dallas area.

At about this same time, the Ted Burgdorf and the Carl Doepel families were becoming increasingly aware of false doctrine that was spreading throughout their Northeast Dallas Lutheran church. Mr. Doepel had written multiple letters to the leadership of their Synod, but their replies did nothing to allay his concerns. The two families were looking for alternatives. They could hardly anticipate how God would bring the alternative to their doorstep.

A postman mistakenly delivered a bundle of Northwestern Lutheran magazines (the WELS news periodical) to the Ted Burgdorf family. The Burgdorfs had been receiving one copy of this journal as a gift subscription. Upon receiving their unexpected package, Mrs. Burgdorf contacted the other subscribers. These historic conversations led to a meeting, on November 5, with Pastor Walter Diehl and Pastor Immanuel Frey of the Arizona/California District Mission Board of the WELS. That evening, the two ministers met with the original nucleus of Calvary: the Ted Burgdorfs, the Carl Doepels, the Joseph Lakases, the Ray Swensons, Ruth Hanson, and Louise Streckfuss. Less than a week later, on November 11, 1962, the General Board for Home Missions of the WELS granted permission to proceed with a mission in Dallas.

The seed that had germinated within the hearts of this core group of people was ready to be fed and nourished by a called pastor. But God had other plans. Initially the call to serve this fledgling church was returned by eight ministers, Pastors Lloyd Hahnke, Herbert Koehler, Arnold Mennicke, Harry Shiley, Carl Leyrer, Armin Keibel, W.A. Wietzke, and Roy Hoenecke. Finally, on December 19, 1963, Pastor Robert Neumann accepted the call to serve. He arrived in Dallas on January 16, 1964 from Manitoba, Canada, with his wife Dorothy and daughter Ruth Ann, right on the heels, ironically, of a big seven inch snowfall. He and his family lived with the Carl Doepel family until January 27, when their rented home, at 7345 Syracuse Drive, became available.

The Planted Seed

1964 – 1971

The seed that had germinated for many months within the hearts of the core group of Calvary was now ready to be planted and begin sinking some roots in North Dallas. Calvary reached the first of many milestones when it held its first worship service on February 2, 1964, at 11:00 a.m. at Crane Funeral Home Chapel on Northwest Highway



with 32 in attendance. Mr. Jerry Crane, owner of the funeral home, permitted use of the chapel rent-free.

Pastor Neumann was installed by Pastor Frey three days later, on February 5, in an 8:00 p.m. service in the Cox Chapel of Highland Park Methodist Church on the Southern Methodist University campus. Pastor Diehl delivered the sermon based on Hebrews 5:1-4 entitled, "God's Selection of a Pastor."

The seed once planted in North Dallas began to spread throughout the North Texas area. Other seeds were planted in the busy year of 1964. On May 3, Pastor Neumann held services for the first time for a number of Lutherans in the Hillsboro area. A few months later, on July 26, summer vicar, Myrl Wagenknecht, conducted the first service in the south Dallas suburb of Duncanville.

In July of 1964 Calvary took steps toward rooting itself more permanently in North Dallas when it purchased land, upon the recommendation of the Mission Board, at the southwest corner of Fisher Road and Trammel Drive. In that same year the seed of Calvary showed its first growth in Christ when Nancy Baker, daughter of Chet and Jenny Baker, became the first infant baptized in the new mission. Chet also served as Calvary's first Sunday School Superintendent and as its first delegate to the Synodical Conference. The congregation finished 1964 with 24 souls and an average attendance of 20.

Calvary's roots grew even deeper in 1965. Three significant events announced to the Lake Highlands neighborhood that Calvary was here to stay. First, in February the church purchased the parsonage at 9422 Clearhurst. Then, in August Calvary officially incorporated. Finally, in September the Fisher Road property was sold back to the original owners and the 3½ acre site at the northeast corner of Church and Audelia Roads was purchased. However, Calvary's most significant expansion came in terms of new souls won for Christ, with Jay and Linda Dunlap the very first adult confirmands.

By 1966 Calvary was serving a growing number of people and owned land on which it hoped to make a more lasting home in North Dallas. It was time for the seed to sprout into the physical plant of a church building. Calvary began building its new church with the help of a \$50,000 loan from the WELS. Of this loan, \$15,000 was designated for land, and \$35,000 for the building, with \$40,000 of the loan interest free. Even while Calvary focused on the home needs of a church building, it still wanted to look beyond its borders and committed \$2.30 per communicant member to mission work as a thank offering for the loan.

Building plans moved forward throughout the year. Carl Doepel and Stan Moore served on the building committee that supervised the construction of the facility. At an



August 14 Voters' Meeting it was announced that members would each donate for the organ and a pew. Work officially began on August 16 and a ground breaking service was held on September 4.

The purpose for which God planted Calvary in North Dallas was vividly impressed on this small group of believers when on June 7 the Lord called Jay Dunlap home to his eternal rest. By the working of God's grace in Word and Sacrament, this single branch of Jesus, the vine, was grafted eternally into Christ. Even with this earthly loss, the mission grew to 46 souls by the end of 1966.

Construction proceeded quickly and was ready for dedication on January 8, 1967. Pastor Frey, President of the Arizona/California District of the WELS, preached the 10:15 a.m. sermon entitled "Building the Walls of Jerusalem" (Nehemiah 4:16,17). Pastor Oscar J. Naumann, President of the WELS, preached at the 4 p.m. service under the theme "Grant Us Grace, Lord, to Continue Faithfully in Thy Word" (John 8:31,32).

With its sanctuary now completed, Calvary began to celebrate a number of "firsts" in ministry. March 24 marked the first Good Friday service, followed by the first Easter service at 10:15 a.m. on March 26. In June, Dale Burgdorf became the first youth confirmand at Calvary. Vacation Bible School began with an average attendance of 44. The new sanctuary also provided Calvary members their first opportunity to express their joy in Christ by providing altar bouquets, which, in 1967, cost \$3.80 from Northlake Flower shop.

The year ended, however, with significant change. In December Pastor Neumann accepted a call to serve another congregation. Under Pastor Neumann's faithful shepherding, Calvary had grown to 63 souls with an average Sunday attendance of 41.

The still freshly planted seed of Calvary was not left for long without a shepherd to tend it. In April of 1968, Pastor Walter Diehl, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church in Tempe, Arizona – and, as chairman of the Arizona/California mission board, instrumental in founding Calvary six years earlier – accepted the call to begin serving the congregation. Under his guiding hand and with the Lord's blessing that year, Calvary's membership grew rapidly to 108 souls. During that year the first weddings were performed at Calvary, four in all. Also, Calvary Young People's Society formally organized on September 29, 1968.

By the end of the year, the carefully planted and nurtured seed of Calvary reached a milestone of maturity, attaining "self supporting" status as a congregation.

Throughout its history, Calvary has not been content to grow in only one place. The "mission spirit" evident already in 1964 with the sprouting of congregations in Hillsboro and Duncanville, continued to branch out in 1969 as Calvary served to anchor



the exploratory mission in Fort Worth. At home, the Lord again blessed Calvary with tremendous growth, claiming 184 souls and an average attendance of 99. By 1970, the church had grown to 208 souls and worshipped an average of 125.

Desiring to sink its roots even further into God's Word, the women of Calvary formally organized Calvary Ladies Bible Study on March 5, 1970. In November of the next year the Ladies Bible Study offered to the congregation a cookbook and a selection of religious Christmas cards.

By 1971 the planted seed of Calvary Lutheran Church was ready to begin sprouting with additional facilities and new ministries. The "planted seed" was ready to become the "growing seed." In response to needed space for fellowship and in anticipation of a day school, Calvary embarked on a building project. The \$55,000 project added a fellowship area that could be divided into 3 partitioned classrooms, a kitchen, two restrooms, an office, a library, six storage closets and a cloakroom. Rod Lange chaired the building committee that included Gary Brechter, Blaine Raymond, Steven Boese, Richard Burgdorf, Randolph Currier, and T.C. Burgdorf. The new 4030 square foot building was dedicated on April 25, 1971. In the service, Pastor Vilas Glaeske, of Christ the Lord Lutheran Church in Houston, preached on Matthew 21:10-16, both the Junior choir (directed by Mrs. Ruth Hahn) and Senior choir (directed by Mrs. Eileen Stangeland) sang, and Dale Burgdorf accompanied with trumpet.

The Sprouting Seed

1972 – 1989

For eight years God had been planting and nurturing the seed of Calvary Lutheran Church with his powerful Word. In those years the seed of Calvary had sprouted other congregations. By 1972 the congregation itself had grown large enough for it to consider sprouting new ministries right at home. Gus Stangeland was serving as the chairman of the board of education in 1972 when the congregation decided to open a Lutheran Elementary School. Mrs. Stephen (Clara) Gregg was called to teach six Kindergarten (four and five-year-old) students, half days. After calls to Miss Ruth Huebner and Miss Katherine Busch were returned, Miss Cynthia Crossfield, a Dr. Martin Luther College graduate, was assigned and accepted the call to teach eight students in grades 1-4, full day. After months of anxious planning and waiting, classes began on August 28, 1972 with fourteen students. In that same year, church membership grew to 260 souls.



Calvary's physical plant was watered, literally, as the new year 1973 began. On January 1st, the pipes in the church ruptured and water poured out for several hours before a church neighbor discovered the break. Two inches of water covered the entire church and educational area. Twenty Calvary members, with the assistance of the Dallas Fire department, worked to remove the water, but were unable to save the new carpeting.

Even after such an inauspicious beginning, the year was filled with a host of blessings. Increased attendance began to stretch the capacity of the sanctuary so a second service was added, rearranging the new service times to 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. A mother/daughter tea sponsored by the Bluebonnets, the summer youth retreat at Bastrop State Park near Austin (\$18 for three days!), and an increase of four children in school enrollment all reflected Calvary's emphasis on youth ministry.

A commemorative worship service was held on February 2, 1974 to recognize a decade of God's grace to Calvary marking the tenth anniversary of its first church service. It was followed with a special dinner and program that included songs by the school children and junior choir.

In that same year, Calvary further nurtured its sprouting children's ministry by calling Dan Schmeling as the first principal of its Lutheran Elementary School. Previously Mr. Schmeling had taught at St. Croix Lutheran High School in St. Paul, Minnesota and came to Calvary with B.S. and M.S. degrees in primary and secondary education. He was installed on July 14, 1974 and just two years later earned his Doctorate degree in secondary education from the University of North Texas (he had the special recognition of being the 1000th doctoral candidate to graduate from NTSU). Mr. Schmeling's wife, Ellen, also joined the teaching staff and classes were expanded to include six grades with 36 students. Just as God's grace was evident in the growing school, so the church membership also grew to 278 souls with average attendance at worship 150.

Calvary's sprouting ministries did not come without their "growing pains." Added staff and facilities stretched Calvary's budget. The Youth Group pitched in and held a car wash fund raiser charging \$1.00 per car, raising \$52 and donating it to the general fund. Members volunteered to clean the church and school three times a week with families taking a turn once every two weeks. The school began saving Campbell's labels to purchase extra-budgetary items. Through the conscientious work of the congregation, the Voters' minutes from March of 1975 could joyfully announce, "due to the generous contributions of the Calvary members, all past bills were paid."

In that same year the Ladies Bible Study decided to review and donate at least one book per month to the Calvary library. The first book donated for "edifying reading" was *Total Woman*, by Maribel Morgan. However, the March newsletter a year later



stated that “due to the sophisticated content it could now be found on a shelf in Dr. Schmeling’s office.” On a less controversial note, the Ladies Bible Study also ordered tableware and a nine piece set of pans for the kitchen, purchased with Betty Crocker coupons.

In that same year, Calvary Lutheran School also began feeling “growing pains.” With the addition of seventh grade and plans for eighth grade the next year, the year started with an enrollment of 40. Kindergarten was staffed by Mrs. Nita Bertram and Mrs. Lois Burgdorf (Mrs. Bertram would serve in some full or part-time capacity through 1985). Adjunct faculty members Mrs. Helen Jungemann teaching science and Mrs. June Rentmeester, Mrs. Marie Ring and Mrs. Mary Junkers overseeing a physical education program were also added to the staff. To aid in the funding of the school program, the 1975 Calvary school tuition was as follows: four-year-old Kindergarten \$15 per month, five-year-old Kindergarten \$40 per month, and first through seventh grades \$50 per month. Those who were not members of Calvary, but desired to send their children to the school, were required to attend a two hour information class before their application for enrollment would be considered.

The blessings of maintaining a Lutheran Elementary School became evident when in May of 1975 Miss Deborah Hahn, daughter of Ruth and OG Hahn became the first daughter of the congregation to graduate from Dr. Martin Luther College. She was assigned to St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church at Van Dyne, Wisconsin, a one room school with 8 grades and 29 pupils. In December of that same year Congressman Jim Collins presented the school with a US Flag that had flown over the Capitol in Washington.

Blessings of growth were also apparent in the church. The elders began regular monthly meetings in order to carry out their charge of spiritual oversight for the congregation (in the following year the elders would divide the congregation into quarters in order to make every member visits). In the worship space the first Advent banners, made by Georgia Lange, were displayed and the carpet was replaced. As a “talk piece” among friends and neighbors, the first Calvary T-shirts were designed and could be purchased for \$3 to \$3.25 each.

1976 proved a year of serious reflection for Calvary. To observe the bicentennial of our country, Pastor Diehl lead a series of prayers imploring God’s blessing to guard and protect our nation so that we may be free to do His work more fully.

The congregation also conducted two surveys. One survey asked for member interest in returning to one service on Sunday mornings. The following information was offered as part of the survey, “The sanctuary holds 176 people (based on 8 in a pew), but people seldom sit more than 6 in a pew. Average Sunday attendance during 1975 was 155.” Another survey, conducted by the elders on behalf of the Synod, concerned the



development of a new catechism translation. The results indicated that 8% favored a new translation while 92% opposed it.

In the same year, Calvary families living in the Richardson area reached a decision to actively explore the possibility of establishing a mission church with our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). They felt it was a viable area for evangelism and offered possibilities for winning new souls for Christ. While some families anticipated moving on from Calvary, the treasurer reported the current ministries needed \$1500 per week to meet budget.

The Ladies Bible Study had an eclectic year of active service. Projects ranged from making medical kits for the missionaries in Africa to painting and wallpapering the kitchen. In addition, they purchased new dishes at a cost of \$104.40 per three dozen cups and saucers and \$31.20 for one dozen plates. They also participated in a market research to raise money for a dishwasher in the kitchen.

In the school, enrollment reached 46 students. To help outfit the school, Calvary purchased desks from the Garland Independent School District and also began saving Post® box tops for athletic equipment.

In October of 1976, Pastor Diehl provided the congregation an opportunity to reflect in its mission and ministry when he accepted a call to serve a congregation in Weslaco, Texas.

After five months of vacancy, Pastor Gene Durfey, who had been serving as the pastor of Glory Lutheran Church in DeSoto, Texas, as well as vacancy pastor to Calvary, accepted the call to serve on February 20th. He was installed on February 27, 1977 in a 4:30 p.m. service. Pastor William Gabb, circuit pastor of the Texas Mission District, preached and Pastor Thomas Haar of St. Mark in Duncanville officiated. A week later Pastor Durfey and his family were welcomed to Calvary with a potluck after the service. The same fellowship event also marked the ten year anniversary of the dedication of the original sanctuary. In the spring of the same year, Calvary offered one of its own to full-time ministry with the graduation of Lois Hahn from DMLC and her assignment to Livonia, Michigan.

Major plans for sprouting the seed of God's Word in North Dallas and beyond occupied Calvary's attention in 1977. In the broader vision, a meeting was held in Austin for WELS members interested in forming an Area Lutheran High School in Texas. In the North Dallas area, Pastor Roger Dale accepted the call to the Richardson mission of the ELS in May. Within Calvary's borders, a radio ministry began in June with both sixty second and fifteen minute spots. They aired at 8:00 a.m. on KPLX 99.5 AM and focused their message on "the full life." Also, a new building committee was formed on



September 13, 1977. Under consideration was a classroom addition for the school. Jack Clark chaired the committee and was joined by members Art Lassila, Ron Zahrt, and Dan Schmeling. After extensive study, on June 11, 1978, the Voters' assembly approved the plan to hire Forrest Upshaw as architect for the project.

Minor ministry changes included the first member mailboxes built near the sanctuary entrance and copies of the New Testament from the New International Version were made available for \$.45 a copy.

Spreading the roots of Calvary to grow new sprouts continued to be a ministry emphasis for Calvary. Calvary supported world-wide mission work with the Lending to the Lord program. As a part of this Synodical program, members could open a passbook savings account that would be used by the Synod for church extension funds. The savings account received 4% interest. In the calendar year 1978, members of Calvary started Lone Star Lutheran Church in Tyler, Texas. The radio ministry continued with slight modifications, now airing on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 11:55 a.m. to noon at a cost of \$32 per second and reaching an audience of 35,000 people. In March of 1978, the congregation formally recognized the value of the Lutheran Elementary School as an evangelism arm of the church.

However, the congregation also understood the need for nurturing its own through instruction in God's Word. In-home Bible studies, called "Circles of Life in Christ," were started. Sunday morning Bible study was called Christian Doctrine and Life Bible Study and were also offered on a weekday morning and evening. Biblical stewardship was taught at cottage meetings in an effort to help members look at the management of their gifts from the Lord. Financial stewardship would help the congregation fund the \$81,000 ministry Calvary had planned for the year (at the time Calvary operated under a \$1,000 deficit each month). The Dr. Martin Luther College choir proclaimed God's Word in song to Calvary members as part of their "Texas Tour."

On a lighter note, Council minutes reported from the maintenance committee chairman "that grass does grow through October and help would be needed to cut it!"

The new year began positively on January 14, 1979, with the approval of building plans by the voters for the classroom addition. \$43,000 had been contributed to the building fund with \$7,000 more expected by completion of the project. A Synod loan of \$25,000 and member loans of \$30,000 gave the congregation the confidence to proceed. Opening was scheduled for August of 1979, but difficulties with the contractor delayed the opening until August 1980.

1979 also brought changes to Calvary's staff. Dale Just joined the faculty to teach middle grades while Pastor Durfey accepted a call to California. The Lord led Pastor



John Gaertner to accept Calvary's call and he was installed on November 25, 1979 by Pastor Myrl Wagenknecht.

The years 1980 and 1981 saw tremendous growth for the sprouting seed of Calvary. The new educational wing was dedicated for the 1980 school year, which began with sixty students and the addition of a ninth grade. In the church, membership increased by forty-six baptized souls. Also, in the spring of 1980, the third Hahn child entered in the full-time work of the church. James Hahn was graduated and assigned to start a new Lutheran Elementary School in Albuquerque, NM.

1981 was an eventful year at Calvary. The Evangelism Committee organized a distribution of fliers to area homes, inviting residents to our Holy Week and Easter Services. In May, Miss Janice Fritz was assigned from DMLC to teach first through third grades. In June, Dale Just accepted a call to Centennial in Milwaukee, and was sent off with God's blessings at a congregational potluck. In July the Constitution Revision Committee met numerous times to revise our Bylaws. In November, over three dozen of our members became part of the new exploratory mission in Lewisville. November also marked the beginning of a monthly newsletter at Calvary. Even with such a flurry of activity and bidding farewell to the Lewisville core group, Calvary closed the year with 379 baptized members (an increase of 135 members in two years) and an average Sunday attendance of 222 (an increase of 90 souls in worship over two years).

Cold weather in January of 1982 caused a church water pipe to freeze and burst. As in 1973, members again gathered to remove water, as well as furniture from the sanctuary. Repairs resulted in new carpeting for the sanctuary, hallways and Sunday school classrooms. During the repairs, church services were held in the fellowship hall for several Sundays. All of the church pews were used for seating, and, yes, they actually did all fit.

In August 1982, Calvary helped its first pastor, Pastor Robert Neumann of Tyler, celebrate 25 years in the ministry. On August 22, seminary student Paul Kupke, father of Calvary member Sherry DeLaGarza, presided at worship at Calvary. Dr. Schmeling returned a call to California Lutheran High School.

In keeping with its "sprouting spirit" Calvary again served as the anchor for new missions in 1982, as members of our congregation helped open WELS churches in Plano/Allen and Arlington. A meeting was held at St. Mark's in Duncanville to explore the possibility of starting a Lutheran Women's Missionary Society circuit in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. That meeting would eventually lead to the formation of Dallas/Fort Worth LWMS circuit in April of 1983.



As part of its 1984 outreach efforts, Calvary prepared pamphlets entitled *Our Lutheran Church Invites You* to assist all families of the congregation in their evangelism. Members were given an opportunity to invite their friends to church in the spring of that year when the touring chorus of Northwestern College presented a concert of sacred music at Calvary.

However, the most exciting event of 1983 for the congregation was hosting the constituting convention of the new South Central District, October 19, 1984. WELS President Carl Mischke attended, along with district presidents Gerald Free (Nebraska District) and Marcus Nitz (Arizona/California District). In November, Calvary celebrated the 500th anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther with a special service and potluck.

On February 5, 1984, Calvary celebrated its 20th anniversary with special services in the morning and a fellowship/potluck in the evening. However, not content just to nurture the seeds at home, Calvary began exploratory services in Wichita Falls in April, served by Pastor Gaertner. Calvary's Synod support took on exciting forms in 1984, with the arrival in May of Mr. Daniel Krause as Vicar to our congregation, and in August, with the departure of twelve young adults of our congregation who returned to Synodical Schools to prepare for the preaching/teaching ministries.

On the home front, Calvary enjoyed a summer Church picnic at nearby Flagpole Hill and in August the Singles Group began meeting again with renewed interest and organization.

With its emphasis on sprouting seeds, Calvary tried to maintain a balance between nurture and outreach. In February 1985, Adult Bible Class ventured into a nurture project with a study of the entire Old Testament projected to last 3 years. On the evangelism side, Calvary, hosted an Evangelism Seminar conducted by Pastor Paul Kelm on November 22-23 attended by about 170 members of WELS congregations from Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. World missions captured the congregation's attention when in November two nurses, serving our synod's medical mission in Zambia and Malawi, Africa gave a presentation. In December, the congregation launched a neighborhood evangelism canvass/survey effort that we hoped would become a monthly endeavor.

Various called staff came and went in 1985 and 1986. Dr. Dan Schmeling accepted a call to Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee and in May, Mr. Robert Favorite, a DMLC graduate from Eagle River, Wisconsin, was assigned as principal. Mrs. David Peterson, (formally Miss Cynthia Crossfield) accepted a call to join the school faculty again and to teach grades 3-5. At an August potluck we bade farewell to Vicar Krause and welcomed Robert Favorite and his new wife Denise. In



1986 Dawn Aswege accepted a call to teach the middle grades in Calvary's Lutheran Elementary School and Mrs. Denise Favorite accepted the call to teach Kindergarten.

In the late 1980's, the Commission on Worship of the WELS began to turn out early samples of the new/revised hymnal, which the Synod in convention had tasked them to produce. Calvary was chosen, in 1987, as one of the congregations asked to field-test these so-called "Samplers." 70% of Calvary members responded favorably to the new, slightly altered "Service of the Word."

Calvary also played "host" a number of times in 1987. In June, Calvary hosted the area WELS Principals' Workshop. The Board of Education hosted our first Annual Sunday School Rally Day in September. In October, our school faculty hosted the two-day WELS South Central District Teachers' Conference. In the same month, we also hosted the Joint Dallas-Fort Worth Reformation Service.

On the home-front, Calvary's Men's Organization treated the ladies to a Valentine's Day chili supper in February. That same month, the young people viewed "Rock and the Christian Role", a video that examined the Christian's attitude toward this type of music. This was also the year that "Home Bible Study" was initiated, a "book club" type of Bible study that intended on reading through the entire Northwestern Publishing House People's Bible Commentary set. In the school, Mrs. Helen Jungemann accepted the call to teach Kindergarten.

Worship and means of grace ministry dominated the noteworthy events of 1988. On February 7, Calvary dedicated a new Allen Organ (model ADC-430) donated by Mr. and Mrs. David Schneider. Pastor Thomas Schneider of Winona, Minnesota served as guest preacher for the organ dedication service. In July, the members observed Pastor John Gaertner's 25 years in the preaching ministry with a service at which South Central District President Vilas Glaeske served as guest speaker and Pastor Timothy Petersen of Atonement presided. Adult Bible Study completed the three year study of the Old Testament in November, and began the "Gifted to Serve" series on stewardship. And in May, daughter of the congregation, Carrie Schmeling, graduated from DMLC and was assigned to Zion, Torrance, CA.

During 1989, Calvary prepared to celebrate 25 years of God's grace in North Dallas. In anticipation of the 25th church anniversary celebration, a fresh coat of paint was added to the church. On February 5, Calvary celebrated its 25th anniversary with three special services. Guest preachers were District President Vilas Glaeske, Calvary's founding Pastor Robert Neumann and WELS Synod President Carl Mischke. An ice storm did not chill spirits for this special day and guests came from hundreds of miles. Following the afternoon service a catered dinner was held in the cafeteria of Lake



Highlands High School. After dinner speakers recalled God's rich blessings during our 25 years.

25 years earlier, Calvary had begun as a simple seed among a few core families. After 25 years, that seed sprouted into 355 baptized souls and an average of 182 worshippers per Sunday. But more than that, by God's grace the seed of Calvary had also sprouted into a viable Lutheran Elementary School where children could receive Christian training in all subjects for time and eternity. By God's grace Calvary had sprouted into sister and daughter congregations through the Dallas/Fort Worth area, where other seeds could sprout and grow in their own soil. By God's grace many hundreds of people had come and gone through Calvary's doors and received God's pure Gospel for the good of their souls. By God's grace some few had also finished their race while at Calvary and with joy the membership could commend these saints to the eternal care of our heavenly Gardener (John 15:1).

After 25 years of going and growing in North Dallas, the leadership of Calvary began to consider expanded pastoral ministry in the form of a two-pastor team. The two-pastor ministry was intended to help train and equip the laity to become more involved in kingdom work. The congregation was surveyed and plans were laid for the calling of a second pastor. The seed of Calvary had sprouted in many ways and in many places for 25 years. With God's help, the seed was ready to become a "growing seed."

The Growing Seed

1990 – 2004

Calvary could already see the sprouting seed growing in 1990. Two children of Calvary entered full-time kingdom work in July of that year, Pastor Joel Gaertner as pastor at Boone County, Kentucky and Miss Sarah Lassila at Pilgrim Lutheran School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Interest in missions sparked Calvary to invite Pastor Mark Cares from Nampa, Idaho (an outreach to the Mormons) to preach at its Mission Festival.

Work on a two-pastor ministry started two years earlier began to take shape with two open meetings of the congregation in September. At a special meeting of the congregation on November 18, 1990, it was decided to call a second pastor to help "strengthen the stakes and lengthen the cords in our Kingdom work." A previous Voters' meeting had established a 2/3 majority vote necessary for the calling of a second pastor. The quorum of voters present would require 31 "yes" votes. The motion was approved with 35 votes.



Calvary opened the year 1991 with a call meeting on January 20 for the purpose of calling Calvary's second pastor. From the list of six candidates, Pastor Burger was called. Not long after extending the first call for a second pastor, Pastor Gaertner received a call to serve the WELS mission in Weslaco, Texas. Pastor Gaertner accepted that call, leaving Calvary to call both a Senior Pastor and an Associate. The congregation held its first call meeting to call a Senior Pastor on April 7, and called Pastor John Mahnke. At the same meeting it was announced that Pastor Gaertner would preach his farewell sermon on May 26, 1991.

With its pastoral staff in flux, Calvary held a special meeting on May 6 for the purpose of calling a Senior Pastor, calling a vacancy Pastor, and calling an Associate Pastor from the Seminary (Pastor Burger had returned Calvary's first Associate's call). At that meeting Pastor William Gabb was called as the Senior Pastor. Only two weeks later, Candidate John Vieths was assigned from the Seminary as the Associate Pastor. Candidate Vieths would graduate on May 31 and arrive in Dallas in July.

In the meantime, 16 more gentlemen over the next two years would receive the divine call to serve as Senior Pastor: Forrest Bivens-June 1991, Dennis Kliet-August 1991, Greg Otterstatter-September 1991, Mark Wessel-November 1991, Curtis Franzmann-December 1991, Pastor Pope-January 1992, Paul Kelm-February 1992, Alan Eckert-April 1992, Peter Kruschel-May 1992, Alan Schroeter-August 1992, Larry Zahn-September 1992, Samuel Clemons, October 1992, James Pope-December 1992, Vilas Glaeske-February 1993, Ted Lambert-April 1993, Paul Janke April 1993. Finally, in spring of 1993, Calvary decided to extend the Senior Pastor position to Pastor Vieths and to call again a Seminary candidate to serve as the Associate Pastor.

While Calvary awaited the arrival of Candidate Vieths, Pastor Norman Berg served as vacancy Pastor. Pastor Vieths and his wife Robin arrived on July 3, and was ordained and installed on July 18, 1991. Pastor Larry Cross from Rochester, Minnesota, Pastor Vieth's home church, performed the ordination rite.

In the fall of 1991, the Ladies Bible Study hosted its first annual Craft Workshop.

Just as the called staff seemed to settle down, Principal Robert Favorite received and accepted a call to St. Peter Lutheran Church in Ft. Collins, Colorado. After calling Mr. Mark Eisenmann and Mr. Kurt Rosenbaum, Mr. Jim Henrickson, from Zion, Torrance, California, accepted the call as principal of the school and was installed in July. During the school year, Calvary school sponsored its first "Read-In" with a dinner, book fair, literature readings and movies.

1992 was also another busy year for sons of the congregation active in ministry. Donald Patterson, son of Calvary members Bill and Jerry Patterson, received his first call



into the ministry to Holy Word Lutheran Church in Austin Texas, while Scott Bertram, son of members David and Nita Bertram was called to serve as evangelist at Risen Savior Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas.

Calvary elders became more active in supporting the pastor in his spiritual work by assisting with distribution of the Lord's supper. They also set a goal of visiting every member at least once in the next two years. In addition, the elders approved placing the New International Version of the Holy Bible in the pews.

The Ladies Bible Study met in a members home, a move so popular they decided to alternate monthly meetings between church and a member's home.

For four years the seed of a two-pastor ministry had been growing in the hearts of Calvary members. Two years earlier the process began with the calling of the first Senior Pastor. Still, Calvary had not received acceptance of this call. Nonetheless Calvary wanted to continue to grow. To better nurture its members, the Stewardship Committee introduced a Shepherding Program which "divided [the congregation] into groups of four or five families, [with] a leader responsible for communicating with the other families and showing spiritual concern for them." The Evangelism Committee invited Pastor Paul Prange from Austin to talk to the youth group about evangelism, after which they canvassed the neighborhoods around the church. Pastor Eugene Ahlswede, Mission Counselor, served as guest preacher and Bible class instructor in July, at which time he informed the congregation of Mission Board plans to start a mission in the Northeast Dallas suburbs of Garland/Rowlett/Sachse. In the school, Mrs. Linda Hengst was called to head up a new preschool program slated to begin the next school year.

After 18 calls for a Senior Pastor, in April Calvary decided to call a candidate from the Seminary as the Associate Pastor, effectively moving Pastor Vieths into the Senior Pastor role. On May 18, 1993, Calvary was informed that Candidate John Koelpin was assigned to serve as the Associate Pastor in Calvary's two-pastor ministry. In anticipation of the arrival of an additional pastor, the voters approved the purchase of another parsonage. Shortly before the Koelpins arrived in July, the search committee received approval to purchase the home at 4318 Jenny Lane, Garland, Texas. On August 15, 1993, Candidate Koelpin was ordained and installed by his associate Pastor John Vieths. Pastor Koelpin's father Professor Arnold Koelpin served as guest preacher for the festival service.

Plans long laid for ministry with two pastors began to take form. In a series of "chapel talks" each committee of the congregation outlined how it would use the new ministry at Calvary. Pastors Vieths and Koelpin were asked to produce a vision for the ministry of Calvary and a Long Range Planning Committee began to meet to develop a



strategy for education and outreach in the congregation. In September, for the first time, two adult Bible classes were offered on Sunday morning.

On the Synodical stage, news came from the convention of Synod in August that our WELS prep schools would be combined in Watertown, Wisconsin and the colleges would amalgamate on the New Ulm, Minnesota campus. The convention also approved the new/revised Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal. Calvary members received their first glimpse of this new worship resource at a Hymnal Introduction Workshop held at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Duncanville in October. In that same month, Calvary had the privilege of hosting a Pastor/Teacher/Delegate Conference together with a special Service of Thanksgiving commemorating ten years of God's grace to the South Central District.

For the first time the Children's Christmas service was held at the beginning of the school Christmas break, prior to Christmas Eve. In its place, Calvary held its first Christmas Eve candlelight service of Lesson and Carols. Both services were well received.

Even as the number of called staff grew in 1993, the years 1993-1995 saw Calvary give back to the ministry in a significant way. Seeds for full-time ministry first planted years earlier came to fruition with six children of the congregation entering kingdom work (one pastor and five teachers). Susan Linn (Our Redeemer, Madison, Wisconsin) and Amy Jungemann (St. Peter, Balaton, Minnesota) graduated in 1993. Alex Ring (pastor ELS, Tacoma, Washington), David Rust (St. Paul, Menomonie, Wisconsin) and Cathy Schmeling (St. John, Libertyville, Illinois) graduated in 1994. And Jill Gaertner (Bethlehem, Hortonville, Wisconsin) graduated in 1995.

On January 23, 1994 the congregation began its formal introduction to Christian Worship with short "spots" at the beginning of the service to help the members become familiar with the new hymnal. After four weeks of introduction, the congregation began formal use of Christian Worship on February 20th. Initially only the "Common Service" liturgy was used. However, by August the elders approved adding the new communion service setting "Service of Word and Sacrament."

In the spring of 1994 a Lutherans for Life group was given approval to formally organize under the auspices of the Board of Education. Other Board of Education business heralded the coming of the "information highway." One computer was placed into each classroom for teacher use and the classrooms were linked together on a common network. Some information, however, was still gleaned the old-fashioned way when a handful of the 55 Calvary students took a trip north to visit Synodical schools. Lutheran Girl Pioneers sponsored a Father/Daughter Banquet in the spring, while the Boy Pioneers, long inactive, made plans to be a viable organization. The Board of Education



also planned and promoted a new VBS format, offering classes in the evening for both children and adults called Family Bible School.

Calvary ended the year with baptized souls reaching the 400 mark for the first time. Average Sunday attendance for the year was 221.

As the seed of Calvary grew internally, the congregation struggled with the usual difficulties that come with functioning as a larger church. In order to address some of the disconnectedness of a larger congregation, Calvary's Stewardship Committee began taking Polaroid pictures of the members to be posted on a bulletin board. This Committee also encouraged the regular use of church-provided name tags on Sunday morning, kicked off with Name Tag Sunday on February 28, 1995. The Board of Elders approved the position of church secretary and outlined a list of duties. Mrs. Sandy Gross, who had worked for many years as the school secretary, volunteered for the church secretary position. Mrs. Lilly Merkilinger, Mrs. Donna Ihms, and Mrs. Marilyn Linn offered to supply the school secretarial help. The Elders also recommended the purchase and use of a common cup in addition to individual cups during the Lord's Supper. The Maintenance Committee implemented the "Calvary Facility Adoption Plan" which asked members to adopt a portion of the grounds for a year.

The challenges that come with growth were made softer for Calvary, when, on April 7, 1995 Calvary commissioned seven active families to begin a new congregation, Divine Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Rowlett, Texas. The first service at Divine Peace was held the following week, Palm Sunday, with Pastor Daniel Voigt shepherding the new church.

In the fall of the year Calvary sponsored its first Fall Festival for the children of the congregation. It also hosted its first Friendship Sunday to which Calvary members invited non-members to come and hear the Good News of the Savior, Jesus.

As the new year began in 1996, Calvary's leadership met to make plans for the upcoming year, presented with the twin challenges of "daughtering" the new mission in Northeast Dallas County while at the same time fulfilling the needs of a growing school enrollment brought on by renewed interest in the school from our sister churches north and east of Calvary. Enrollment in the school had grown by 18 students in just two years.

In the spiritual life of the congregation, the elders recommended celebrating the Lord's Supper during Ash Wednesday worship. They also encouraged the pastors to launch a spiritual growth program in which every communicant member visited with one of the pastors for a "Spiritual Check-up." These meetings proved beneficial both for Calvary's shepherds and the sheep.



The enrollment blessings that began in 1996 continued in 1997 with a beginning enrollment of 80 students. Previous congregational meetings had failed to resolve the issue of staffing to meet the needs of a ballooning enrollment. Prior to the start of school, three individuals (Mrs. Carole Ihms, Mrs. Linda Hengst, and Mr. Leo Frese) came forward unsolicited and volunteered their time and abilities to help ease the teaching challenges caused by growth in the school. Because these volunteers would be directly involved in sharing means of grace on behalf of the congregation and be responsible for preparing their own lesson plans and teaching, it was felt only proper that the congregation call them to such positions. Mr. Frese was called to teach two subjects in the upper grade classroom to allow Principal Henrickson time for administrative duties. Carole Ihms and Linda Hengst were called to team teach first and second grade. In order to accommodate this new class, the Voters approved the remodeling of the old church library/youth room for use as a classroom. The addition of these volunteer teachers also marked the creating of new grade divisions, with Helen Jungemann teaching Kindergarten, Carole Ihms and Linda Hengst in grades 1 & 2, Jan Fritz in grades 3 & 4, Dawn Aswege in grades 5 & 6, and Jim Henrickson and Leo Frese in grades 7 thru 9.

1997 also marked the 25th anniversary of Calvary Lutheran School. Planning for the anniversary culminated with invitations to former students, families, and former teachers of Calvary Lutheran School to join in a weekend of activities. On Saturday, June 14, Calvary hosted a fellowship picnic at Breckenridge Park in Richardson, followed on Sunday afternoon with a special worship service, an open house and a potluck dinner with program. In recognition of the 25th anniversary, a special gift to the school from various individuals was offered in thanks for God's blessings. These gifts allowed the purchase of new school desks.

In addition to the staffing changes and the anniversary, the Board of Education also recommended the discontinuance of the "computer fund," instead rolling technology fees and the computer budget into a standard portion of the school registration fees. The technology committee completed a church and school Ethernet network. Also under the Board of Education purview were the Pioneers which hosted their first fellowship campout at Eisenhower State Park as well as the very first Lutheran Girl Pioneer pinecar derby.

In a busy year of school activities, the other Boards were also busy at work. The Elders passed a resolution to regularly place the baptismal font in the middle of the main aisle in front of the chancel steps as a way of reminding worshippers of their baptism each time they enter the sanctuary or come forward for the Lord's Supper. They also proposed using "Morning Praise" on the 5th Sunday of a month, and moving Calvary's regular evening services from 7:30 to 7:00 p.m., a change that had noticeable results in Advent and Lenten attendance. The Board of Stewardship presented a debt retirement program and the Evangelism Committee inaugurated "worknights" on the first and third



Tuesday of each month. On these “worknights” members meet to make visits, phone calls or address mailings.

In the year 1997, Calvary’s proposed budget was \$391,404.00, while membership stood at 438 souls.

With nearly 35 years of growth as a congregation, 25 years of blessings from the school, and entering the fifth year of the two-pastor ministry, Pastor Koelpin offered these words to the congregation as the year came to a close, “From where Calvary began to where it is today, we can see that God has done great things at this congregation. It is my prayer that this congregation continues to be a voice with the community which takes the Word of God seriously, which remains true to the confessions of the Church throughout the ages, which is willing to put into actions what the Bible tells us in words. It is my prayer that this congregation not settle for maintaining what it has but seeks to grow, getting out the message of Christ crucified here where we are and elsewhere in this metropolitan area. It is my prayer that the vision of a two pastor ministry not become an excuse for complacency, but that more and more the members of Calvary are willing to do more – be that personal Bible study, be that regular worship, be that evangelizing, be that serving, be that giving, be that encouraging, or be that caring more for one another. As your pastor, I commend all of you to the grace and mercy of our loving God, who took such great delight in us that he was willing to call us brothers, “was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” (Romans 4:25).

Already in the late 1980’s the membership of Calvary began to lay plans for greater lay involvement in ministry through the increase of called staff. 1998 began as a year in which the called leadership of Calvary intended on deliberately encouraging such lay involvement. Pastors Vieths and Koelpin taught a bi-monthly Bible class for lay leaders entitled Training Christians for Ministry (TCM) with emphasis on Old and New Testament. The Stewardship Committee challenged the membership to involvement both financially and with their time and abilities through a series of luncheon meetings called “Are You Able?” Evidence that God’s Stewardship message works came in July with the treasurer report showing a \$3,926 surplus in our checking. In an effort to keep the membership aware of opportunities to show love for fellow members the elders added “Keep Them in Your Prayers” and “Member Care” sections to the monthly newsletter. The Evangelism Committee led a series of “focus group” meetings in which Calvary members were encouraged by one another to invite their unchurched friends and neighbors to a Calvary fellowship event to hear about Jesus. This committee also received a \$900.00 grant from Lutheran Brotherhood Foundation to assist in a program of mailing brochures to new homeowners in Lake Highlands. These mailings were followed up with phone calls to inquire if homeowners had a church home. The school hosted a career week, in which members spoke in classrooms about their career and how their chosen skills affect their faith. The voters also approved a Board of Education



recommendation for an Educational Assistance fund to help defray costs for families whose children attend Calvary School. Finally, a set of Tone Chimes was purchased and a newly formed “Chime Choir” played for the first time in the Children’s Christmas service. In all these ways, Calvary’s leadership sought to fulfill the member’s desire for ministry. The sprouting seed was growing within the lives of Calvary’s members.

Little could the staff anticipate, however, how God would present Calvary’s members with a host of unplanned opportunities for ministry in 1998. In the summer of 1998, Pastor Voigt at Divine Peace accepted a call to teach in Washington and Pastor Koelpin was called to serve the vacancy. Not a month later Atonement Lutheran Church in Plano also became vacant and Pastor Vieths was called to serve the vacancy. With both vacant congregations desiring a continuation of Sunday morning worship, Pastor Vieths and Koelpin alternated leading worship at Calvary and the two sister congregations. With Calvary’s pastors serving three congregations (and at one point four, with a vacancy at the ELS church in Richardson), Calvary’s lay leadership stepped up to the task. Calvary’s average attendance reached its all-time high of 236 during 1998, even with the strain on its called leadership.

The unexpected opportunities for service, however, were just beginning. Just as school began, an extensive water leak was discovered at the teacherage on Royalwood. This would be a precursor of more major problems at the teacherage which would consume some of Calvary’s time in the years to come. A few months later an inspection by the fire department advised that we build a separate building not attached to the school, to house any gas-powered equipment. This project was designed and completed by Calvary member Tony Aragona. It was intended as a shed play cabin and teaching deck for an expected cost of \$4000. Finally, the increase in membership meant there were no longer enough member mailboxes. Member Paul Pruitt designed and built new church mailboxes to accommodate the larger membership and relocated them to the entrance near the parking lot.

Happily, the growth in numbers of Calvary’s seed, afforded Calvary the opportunity for some welcome changes in 1998. After a year of volunteer labor in the school, the voters approved calling Linda Hengst as a full time paid teacher for grades 1 & 2. Patti Henrickson was subsequently called to teach preschool in the 98-99 school year to fill the vacancy left by Mrs. Hengst. With this more permanent arrangement, Kindergarten moved into the renovated library and the 1st & 2nd grade room moved to the left side room at the end of the school hallway. Things changed on Sunday mornings, too. The Sunday School procedure was altered with the children heading straight to their classes to begin the hour and joining the adults in the sanctuary for a closing. In worship, the Elders introduced a new procedure for distribution of the Lord’s Supper. Celebrants would stand in front of the first pews to receive the Supper instead of climbing the stairs into the chancel. The elders also observed more frequent setting up of chairs to



accommodate worshippers and began to study ways of increasing our worship space. Tony Aragona, architect and Calvary member, was asked to present a plan to expand our church balcony with seating for 40 people.

1998 was also the year Calvary stepped headlong into the “internet era.” E-mail addresses were added to the Calvary directory and Calvary began hosting its own webpage.

Already in late 1998, things began to return to normal for Calvary’s leadership. Pastor John Hering, missionary to Japan, accepted the call to serve Divine Peace and arrived in November of 1998. In early 1999, Pastor William Gabb accepted the call to serve Atonement Lutheran Church. However, after many months of assisting other congregations, the Lord of the Church decided it was time for Calvary’s staff to reconsider its work at Calvary. In the spring of the year, all the Calvary staff who were also recognized as “heads of household” received calls to serve elsewhere. Pastor Vieths held a call to East Fork Lutheran High, Whiteriver, Arizona; Pastor Koelpin held calls to Risen Savior, Oostburg, Wisconsin and West Lutheran High, St. Paul, Minnesota; Jim Henrickson held a call to Emmanuel Lutheran School, West St. Paul, Minnesota and in June to Shoreland Lutheran High School, Sommers, Wisconsin; Dawn Aswege held calls to and Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota and St. John’s, Two Rivers, Wisconsin; and Jan Fritz held a call to Siloah Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In each case the Holy Spirit led the workers to return their calls and remain in service at Calvary.

In the fall of the year, the earlier leak at the teacherage proved to be worse than at first anticipated. Studies on the house revealed structural and environmental problems underneath the house that would prevent occupancy by the Henricksons. Quick action by Calvary members secured a one-year lease on a different house and moved the Henricksons to their new location. Meanwhile insurance companies evaluated the extent of damage and cost of repairs while the congregation prayerfully considered repairing or selling the home. In the spring of the following year, the congregation would approve the sale of both the teacherage and the second parsonage together with the purchase of a new teacherage (9125 Church Rd.) and parsonage (9909 Vistadale Dr.).

With its staff situation a bit more settled, Calvary turned its attention toward fellowship and ministry among its members. A Fellowship Committee planned a number of events meant to bring people of Calvary together, such as, a road rally, a chili dinner game night, and an Fall Festival. In addition, the seeds of a fellowship and Bible study group among Young Adults were also sown. Among the ladies of the congregation, the Ladies Bible study hosted a secret pal program and a Quilt Lock in.



Increased staff, volunteer help, and students helped the school branch out into new areas in 1999. The use of a new math curriculum over the past few years was again introduced in the fall of the year at a “Math Night” hosted for parents to help them understand the new methods their children are using to solve math problems. Since Calvary continued to hear pleas for expanding the school through 12th grade, the Board of Education authorized the formation of a committee to explore such a possibility. The seeds of elementary education so long treasured at Calvary wanted to grow into further ministry to high school students. With more and more parents unable to pick up their children at the 3:30 p.m. closing time, the Board of Education explored and implemented an After School Care program. In the spring of the year, Dr. Kay Aragona led a five-day art history tour to London for girls in grades 5-9. During the school year 1999, the Board of Education became increasingly aware of the difficulties of transferring the credits of our graduates to other schools since Calvary was not formally accredited by any outside agency. The voters gave the Board of Education the authority to pursue such accreditation from the Texas Alliance of Accredited Private Schools (TAAPS) in the coming school year.

Not all the ministry at Calvary was nurture, however. A long time in planning, the Evangelism Committee opened Calvary to English as a Second Language classes (ESL), led by a number of trained and capable volunteers from Calvary. Calvary also reached out again with one of its own when Sarah Zahrt, daughter of the congregation, graduated and was assigned to Good Shepherd, Omaha, NE.

The year 2000 marked, by the accounting of some, the beginning of a new millennia. Calvary noted such in a special New Year’s eve service on December 31, 1999 in which the worshippers remembered God’s grace to mankind throughout the millennia of this world’s existence. As a response to the dedication God has shown Calvary in saving and preserving his flock, Calvary’s leadership dedicated itself and the congregation to continued growth in Christian faith and life. The Elders strongly promoted attendance at the monthly Home Bible Study, a “book club” style Bible class that began thirteen years earlier and had nearly finished studying every book of the Bible. Audio and video tapes of worship were made more readily available and members were encouraged to use them personally or take them to those who can not attend worship. In support of the world-wide mission of the WELS and the training of future workers, Calvary promised 16% of it’s offerings to the Synod.

The year 2000 also coincided with the 150th anniversary of the WELS. Each of the twelve districts of the WELS was encouraged to mark these significant milestones with celebrations of joy and thanksgiving. The South Central District celebrated the occasion on June 4th with a special presentation by WELS member and former “evangelical” Craig Parton and a special worship service at which District President Vilas Glaeske presided and President of the WELS, Karl Gurgel, preached. President Gurgel



inspired us with his message, “The Means to Go Forward In Christ Into a New Millennium.” Both events were hosted by Calvary at the Lake Highlands High School Auditorium.

During this first year of the new millennium, Calvary began to give serious consideration to its need for expanded facilities. It was becoming more and more apparent that the current facilities did not allow for future growth or for fulfilling present ministry goals such as increased Bible classes offerings on Sunday morning, space for fellowship, and additional seating to reach out to the lost (as evidenced by the Elders decision to use North Highlands Bible Church for the children’s Christmas Service since the more than 90 students and their families would not fit into our chapel). The called leadership began a number of early morning meetings to develop a long range vision for the congregation and also sought the input of the members through a series of open forums. Most members attending felt Calvary should stay at its present location but that increased space for worship, fellowship and study was most important. It was determined that Calvary’s ministry suffered from lack of worship, educational and fellowship space as well as storage and parking. A result of these meetings was the appointment of a Facilities Planning Committee, tasked with the objective of developing a master plan for our facilities that would guide Calvary over the next ten to twenty years. The members of the Facilities Planning Committee were Steve Strucely (Chairman), David Bertram, Dale Burgdorf, Teel Dunlap, Tracy Linn, Brian Miller, and Mark Tredo.

The decision from the previous year to pursue accreditation for the school consumed much of the time of the staff and Board of Education. The accreditation would assist the school by providing for regular self study of our program and assuring that course credits would be accepted by other public and private schools in the state. It would also allow Calvary access to the resources provided to educational professionals in other TAAPS schools. In the spring of the following year, Calvary would receive it accreditation for the maximum number of years allowed. In other business, the Board of Education recommended discontinuing preschool due to declining enrollment and to call the preschool teacher, Patti Henrickson, to teach half days in grades 7-9 in order to provide the principal with administrative time. Such time was a welcome addition for the principal with an increased load of administrative requirements from the state and a school enrollment of 88. Still attempting to remain on top of new technologies, Calvary received, with thanks, 7 new computers through the IBM employee donation program.

As the first year of the new millennium drew to a close, Calvary was filled with joy at the news that former member Jim Hofferbert had begun studying for the full-time ministry at Martin Luther College as a second career student. In this same year another of Calvary’s former members and students, Julie Gaertner, graduated and was assigned to St. John’s, Lewiston, Minnesota. News also reached Calvary that the South Central



District, through two generous and visionary donors, had purchased a retreat center in East Texas, renamed Camp Shiloh.

Work began in earnest to make the purchased retreat center into a viable ministry arm of the District. Early in 2001, WELS Kingdom workers arrived to work on a newly designed conference center. Calvary agreed to provide meals to the workers together with other area WELS churches.

In January of 2001 Calvary also welcomed former graduate of Calvary Lutheran School, Pastor Alexander Ring of Parkland Lutheran Church ELS, to preach the New Year's Day service.

In February, the Board of Elders held a special service to commemorate anniversary milestones of ministry for six of our called workers. Combining anniversaries from the previous and the current year Calvary gave thanks to God for Helen Jungemann - 25 years, Dawn Aswege - 20 years, Jan Fritz - 20 years, Linda Hengst - 20 years, Jim Henrickson - 15 years, Pastor John Vieths - 10 years. Together these servants of the Lord had labored in God's kingdom for more than 100 years, most of those at Calvary. In the fall of the year, Calvary also noted four couples who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversaries in this calendar year, Lois and Ted Burgdorf, Louise and Fred Germer, Ruth and OG Hahn, and Sandra and Ray Wells.

In collaboration with Mr. Leo Frese, who supervised the acolytes, the Board of Elders proposed the acolytes begin wearing gowns as they tended the candles during worship. Also, the acolytes would enter and leave the chapel with the flame lit, in this way never allowing the congregation to see the flame extinguished, a reminder of the never fading glory of Jesus "the light of the world."

In the fall of the year, Pastors Vieths and Koelpin presented a proposed re-division of their duties with a vision for their two pastor ministry. With a desire for more emphasis on outreach through canvassing, mailings, personal visits, and an increased awareness of member evangelism, one pastor would work strictly with evangelism. Pastor Vieths outlined his vision to heighten community awareness of Christ and Calvary through advertising in newspapers and with signs and flyers announcing our special events such as Christmas, Easter, Oktoberfest, Bible school etc. He also discussed the development of a cross cultural ministry using ESL programs through our bilingual members. This evangelism pastor would lead the outreach and instruct non-members who have shown and interest in the Gospel. The other pastor would handle the rest of the pastoral duties at Calvary, effectively becoming the Senior Pastor. His duties would include administrative duties, making member visits to shut-ins and to the hospital, lead classes for nurture of our current members, be a liaison with Ladies Bible Study, Home Bible Study, Calvary Lutheran School, Youth Group, etc. The Senior Pastor



would also assume greater responsibilities for preaching, teaching, member counseling, and planning.

September 11, 2001, brought tragedy to the members of Calvary and the rest of the nation with the shocking events in New York. The chapel was kept open on that day and the days following, with special personal meditations made available for those who needed time alone in God's house. A number of people in the neighborhood asked for and made use of Calvary for that purpose. On September 12, Calvary held a special service of "Prayer for the Nation." Calvary members joined to pray for the survivors of the terrorist attacks in New York, the bereaved families, the firefighters, the rescue workers and all volunteers. Pastor Koelpin led us in devotion on God's word using Psalm 43:5 as his text, "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

In other work, the Board of Elders decided to move the congregation to using the new wording of the Lord's Prayer. The plan for measured introduction called for its first use the first week of November and again on Thanksgiving Day. Also, due to declining attendance, the Elders discontinued the Wednesday evening worship services, with a promise, however, to revisit the alternate service. The Board also approved the new Calvary Youth group, renamed Teens Living for Christ (TLC). The group even designed a T-shirt reflecting this theme. TLC heard a presentation by Ahmad Sedaghat, staff intern at Divine Peace, who told about his experience as an Iranian who came to faith in Jesus as the result of a flyer he received from a Japanese missionary.

The Facilities Planning Committee formed in 2000, began to interview architectural firms who would be hired to form Calvary's master facilities plan. The April building fund amount of \$17,500 was enough to cover the initial cost of a master plan, estimated at \$15,000. The committee selected and signed a contract with them on June 25, 2001. The architects were given a September completion goal. By August the committee had done its research and the architects had finished their initial drawings. That month the committee selected one of the two plans presented and in November held an open forum to present the final proposal for the master site plan. The three-phased master site plan was approved and the go ahead was given for the first phase of a new sanctuary.

In the school, Calvary School completed its accreditation and received approval in December. TAAPS felt that Calvary was one of the best private schools that they had visited for accreditation and commended the quality of faculty and staff in dedication and experience.

In that same month a new Christmas Decorating Party was held at which children and adults participated in decorating, singing, learning, and card making.



Pastor Vieths began to move forward on his evangelism vision. Partners in Conversation (English conversation for people new to the United States), under the direction of Mr. Walter Strucely, began to meet at the Audelia Branch Library on Sunday afternoons. It offered a non-threatening atmosphere to show love for our new neighbors and share a word with them about our Savior. In September there were 7 volunteers and 27 students. The Evangelism Committee also hosted four casual evenings for the unchurched at which Calvary could explain Christianity and talk about the uniqueness of our church. Members were encouraged to ask friends and neighbors to come and hear about Jesus. Evangelism combined with Fellowship to put on the first Oktoberfest (October 27th) complete with German food, an Oompah Band, polka music, games and activities.

Effects of the economic downturn since the turn of the century captured much of the attention in the year 2002. The synod reported that the budget had fallen on hard times in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Major donors to our Synodical work were forced to severely reduce their contributions. The result was a \$4.3 million shortfall in the 2002/2003 budget year, and a projected \$8 million deficit for the following year. Every area of ministry was affected. Of the roughly 700 workers staffing worker training schools, home missions, world mission, and administration, about 15% (105) people would lose their present positions. South Central district President Vilas Glaeske asked the members of the Synod to pray for wisdom from the Lord to deal with the financial shortage and to participate in an offering over and above regular gifts.

Calvary determined to do what it could to relieve the financial burden facing the Synod, while continuing to venture forward with plans to expand the growing seed at Calvary. The Facilities Planning Committee, now finished with its work, transitioned into the Building Committee. In April, the building project took on a theme, complete with its own logo – “Growing for Christ, Building for the Future.” As a first step, the Building Committee proposed a capital campaign to raise money for the building of a new sanctuary. The voters approved, in concept, the hiring of a stewardship/fundraising consultant to assist us in organizing a capital campaign. A number of firms were interviewed before Calvary selected RSI and their consultant Dr. Steve Boehning. Over a series of months beginning in August 2002, members were asked to consider a personal and financial commitment to this challenging project. The capital campaign culminated with an October Special Event Sunday held at the Castle at Canyon Creek. At that service members made personal, private commitments, which were later tabulated to over \$1 million in over-and-above commitments.

Calvary’s commitment to ministry took other forms than the building project and its capital campaign. Regular ministry continued with its usual surprising joys and delights. Highlights from youth ministry from the year included these noteworthy items:



Laura Beth Sampe spoke to the TLC and shared her opportunities to witness about her Savior working as an event planner and traveling with pop group N'SYNC. A 7th and 8th grade Youth Group organized under capable and ready leadership. Boy and Girl pioneers held a District Campout at Camp Shiloh under the theme F.R.O.G., that is, Fully Rely on God. On May 19 the confirmands were examined during the Sunday school bible hour for the first time. The rite of confirmation was conducted the following Sunday in the early service, followed by their partaking the Lord's Supper in the late service. In the school, work between Calvary and its sister congregations continued to move forward, evidenced by the following breakdown of enrollment: 62% Calvary, 16% Divine Peace, 10% Atonement, 2% St. Mark, 1% Good Shepherd, and 9% Mission.

Calvary's adults were also active in ministry in 2002. The Lutheran Women's Missionary Society (LWMS) heightened Calvary's interest in missions by announcing that B.A.M. was coming and offering a prize to those who guessed what it is ... turned out to be Befriend A Mission. The Ladies Bible Study discussed making crafted crosses to give to first time visitors. They also hosted a "Mission to the Children of Mexico" project. Ladies participated in an overnight blanket making project and designated them as gifts to the aforementioned mission. In July LBS put into place a Prayer Chain using email. Prayer requests could be forwarded to everyone on the list through the following address: Calvarylbs@yahoo.com. The men of the congregation reorganized a long resting Men's Bible Study to meet on Tuesdays at 7:00 a.m. The men of the Board of Maintenance also noted, "that Rat Bait had been placed around the property - and had been successful in several cases...." For both men and women, Calvary offered Christian Family classes on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month. The Fellowship Committee also planned a Progressive dinner, Shakespeare in the Park, an outdoor movie night, and a Road Rally.

Calvary kept outreach in its plans. In March ESL classes began on Saturdays from 12:30 - 3 p.m. as a way to make contacts in our community. The first day of classes had 23 students. The Evangelism Committee also promoted a new WELS designed website for the unchurched: www.whataboutjesus.com. Some of Calvary's staff helped to write the articles that appear on the website.

September again brought a sobering day as Calvary remembered the September 11, 2001 tragedy with a Service of Meditation. On a more joyous note, on September 22, former principal at Calvary, Dr. Dan Schmeling, was installed as the new director of Camp Shiloh Lutheran Retreat Center.

Calvary ended 2002 with a baptized membership at 460 souls and a 215 average Sunday attendance.



Calvary's vision for a new sanctuary continued to move forward in 2003. With approval of a concept and commitments for funding, the Building Committee moved gingerly to match the building with the finances. Brown, Brown and Associates were retained as the architects for the project. After a number of revisions to the plan the committee proposed a \$1.7 million project for the construction of a new sanctuary, narthex and added parking. The cost of the project included some upfront site work that would save Calvary money in future phases. The voters approved the project and gave the building committee the authority to hire a contractor. Another selection process ended with Julian P. Barry winning the contract. After many months of planning and waiting, the construction officially got underway November 9th with a ground-breaking service for our new sanctuary. Members were encouraged to polish up and bring their own shovels. Calvary students had measured and sprayed painted the outline of the new sanctuary on it's "to be" location. Play sand and plastic shovels were provided so that even our smallest members could feel a part of this wonderful occasion. By December 22nd, dirt was being moved and we were on our way!

While the building program captured the visual attention of Calvary members, God's Word was still the centerpiece of our work and ministry to touch the hearts of people with the Gospel. In an effort to provide better ministry to the ladies of our congregation, the Board of Elders resolved to establish the office of Deaconess at Calvary. The deaconess ministry would work under the auspices of the Board of Elders and minister only to the women of Calvary. Fran Pruitt Blevins accepted this position and was installed in a regular Sunday worship service. The Elders also increased their board from 6 to 8 in order to provide more consistent ministry to the membership.

In March of 2003, God provided Calvary an opportunity to express its love when Aaron Vieths, son of Pastor John and Robin Vieths, was diagnosed with cancer. Members provided meals, visitation, and financial help. In response to the diagnosis, a thorough check of the Vieths home discovered that the furnace in the parsonage had been installed upside down. The error was rectified along with some other minor renovations.

Members of Calvary also noted two milestones in ministry during 2003. On July 20, a service was held for former Calvary pastor, John Gaertner, at Holy Cross Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to celebrate his fortieth year in the Holy Ministry. Later that fall, Calvary remembered the ten year anniversary of ministry for Pastor John Koelpin, inviting his father, Professor Emeritus Arnold Koelpin as the guest preacher.

2004 has seen a number of ministry objectives begin to reach their goal. The most obvious is the grand sanctuary now towering over Audelia Road – a symbol to God's glory and a place for his pure Word to resonate in the hearts of people. From displaced dirt in late December 2003 to highly organized wood, steel, cement and brick in September 2004, Calvary's vision for ministry now has a place for the seed to sprout and



grow. Along the way, the staff, school children, members and visitors have been patient, yet excited, as the structure slowly took form. Everyone looks forward to the normalcy that will come in the months to come, as we seize the opportunities God provides for doing his work in this place.

But ministry has continued in other major ways in 2004. This year saw another accreditation self-study which concluded with a second maximum accreditation (5 years). Part of the process of self-study urged Calvary and its sister congregations to begin an analysis of cooperation with the school between the churches. The result has been the Inter Church School Study Committee, chaired by former Calvary Principal Dan Schmeling and represented by members from Calvary, Atonement, and Divine Peace. All three congregations await the committees recommendations as we seek to formalize our work together with the school.

During the fiscal year 2003/2004 Calvary's Church Council read through materials for beginning work in cross-cultural fields. At the end of the study, the Council recommended to the Evangelism Committee to begin the process outlined in the materials. As a result, Calvary is currently engaged in an additional internal self-study seeking information and input from the congregation concerning evangelism goals.

The fortieth anniversary committee also began functioning in 2004. From the very start, the committee saw great benefit in combining the dedication of the new sanctuary with the anniversary celebration. September 26th was selected as the Sunday on which to celebrate both – the anniversary in the morning and the dedication in the afternoon. Pastor Joel Gaertner, son of the congregation, accepted the invitation to preach at the anniversary and Dr. Dan Schmeling consented to lead an inspirational Bible Study. Invitations were sent out to former staff, members, and people involved with the building project to join in the dedication service in the afternoon. Displays were set up and the new church completed for the occasions. A meal following the service would give those near and far and chance for fellowship and Christian encouragement.

As the congregation's membership and ministry grows, the staff has recognized a greater need for vision and leadership from its called workers and lay leaders. Present discussions seek ways to strengthen Calvary's leadership so that the seed once germinated, planted and sprouted might continue to grow here and beyond.

Efforts for improved ministry to members and non-members alike have continued to grow in 2004. An additional four deaconess helpers were asked to assist Deaconess Pruitt-Blevins. The expanded Board of Elders has made faithful strides to carry out its spiritual work. The team of evangelists trained and led by Pastor Vieths continues to increase. Efforts to promote Calvary in the wider Dallas area have proved successful in getting Calvary in newspaper print. School and Sunday School education continue to



benefit from an experienced and committed staff, both professional and compassionate in their work.

Calvary vision and expansion have not come without their challenges. Much work lies ahead of Calvary if it wants to carry through on its goals. Tests in commitments of time, abilities and resources will have to be met to keep the forward momentum going. All this would seem overwhelming, if it were not for the promises of God in whose hands we rest. It is HIS word we share. It is HIS glory we seek. It is HIS strength that will carry us through. He has, after all, promised us that, “my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:11).

From beginning until now, Calvary’s vision really hasn’t changed – to PROCLAIM the law and gospel, to lead sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ for life and salvation, to STRENGTHEN believers in faith and sanctification through the means of grace, to EQUIP believers as disciples, stewards, and witnesses for sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our fellow men. It is the vision from the Scriptures that God gave Calvary’s first members. May that vision remain unchanged among us even as God’s Word will not change.

The seed of faith that God had planted in those early core members has been carried on by faithful Calvary members to the generations behind them. By God’s grace the seed of repentance and faith that first germinated in the hearts of God’s people lived outwardly in the seed called Calvary. From humble beginnings to the church as it stands today, that seed has sprouted and grown only because the foundation has remained the same, “For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:11).

Soli Deo Gloria – September 24, 2004



CALVARY'S CALLED WORKERS

1964 – 2004

PASTORS

Rev. Robert Neumann (1964-67)

Rev. Walter Diehl (1968-76)

Rev. Gene Durfey (1977-79)

Rev. John Gaertner (1979-1991)

Rev. John Vieths (1991-present)

Rev. John Koelpin(1993-present)

VICARS

Mryl Wagenknect (1964)

Daniel Krause (1984-85)

TEACHERS

Principals

Dr. Daniel Schmeling (1974-85)

Mr. Robert Favorite (1985-1991)

Mr. James Henrickson (1991-present)



Pre-School

Mrs. Eileen Stangleland

Mrs. Joan Rust

Mrs. Linda Hengst

Mrs. Patti Henrickson

Kindergarten

Mrs. Clara Gregg

Mrs. D'Ann Thompson

Mrs. Lois Burgdorf

Mrs. Nita Bertram

Mrs. Cindy Peterson

Mrs. Denise Favorite

Mrs. Helen Jungemann

Grade School

Mrs. Cindy (Crossfield) Peterson

Mrs. Ellen Schmeling

Mr. Dale Just

Miss Janice Fritz

Miss Dawn Aswege

Mrs. Linda Hengst

Mrs. Carole Ihms

Mr. Leo Frese

Mrs. Patti Henrickson