

INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Anniversaries and milestone birthdays are special times to look back with pride at past accomplishments. Equally important, however, they provide opportunities to reflect on lessons learned over the years that can serve as guideposts for the future.

Calvary Hill Baptist Church approaches its 60th anniversary debt free, sitting on six acres of enviable property on Little River Turnpike in Fairfax, Virginia, that continue to rise in value. Given the financial situation of many aging mainline Protestant churches in the United States these days, this is no small achievement.

Calvary Hill does share a major concern with a number of its sister churches, however. Membership has declined significantly, which will eventually take a toll on its financial security also. As Kay Cumbie pointed out in Chapter 1, which covers the first 35 years of this updated history, Sunday School attendance between 1959 and 1969 grew from 76 to 336 – and one of the congregation’s biggest problems was the lack of space. And in Chapter 2, which highlights the following 10 years, Sherrie Cherdak discussed the growing Youth Program that flourished during the 2000s. But as mentioned in Chapter 3, by the summer of 2017 only one combined Sunday School class was needed for all the elementary school-aged children attending Calvary Hill.

Despite energetic and creative outreach efforts over the past two decades, membership has continued to fall. Compounding this ongoing problem, the congregation currently finds itself in the midst of a lengthy process of self-reflection leading to the calling of a new Senior Pastor. After the departure in 2016 of Pastors Jeff and Beth Willetts, who had served Calvary Hill admirably for almost 18 years, the church committed itself to participating in the Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM) Process, which can take as long as 12-18 months. If all goes as planned, however, interviews of pastoral candidates could finally begin before the congregation celebrates its 60th anniversary in June 2018.

This updated history adds one more chapter to the story of the life of Calvary Hill. It is also intended to be a helpful reference for the pastoral candidates as they consider becoming part of this 60-year old church family. Each chapter is included as originally published to commemorate the 35th and the 50th anniversaries. The voices are different, reflecting different times, but they highlight common threads woven together over the past six decades: a commitment to Christian Education, an emphasis on meaningful worship through music and thought-provoking sermons, an active commitment to mission work, and an abiding sense of fellowship.

As the author of Chapter 3, which covers 2008-2018, I would like to thank the many people who filled out questionnaires, took time for interviews, answered innumerable phone calls and texts, and went back into dusty files to retrieve information. An extra *gracias* is extended to

the following church members for their support as sounding boards and research assistants throughout the process: Linda Austin, Carolyn Kramer, Pastor Ruth Muhlbauer, Jenny Raymer, Rev. Anne Smith, Beth Ann Velo, Jeanne Woodside.

Every effort was made to verify information included in this history. However, readers should contact the church office regarding any errors that are found so corrections can be made in future editions.

-- Kitty Shaw-Gardner. May 2018

1958 – 1993

CHAPTER 1: Birth and Growth

Kay Cumbie

The late 1950s found Northern Virginia engulfed by an unexpected population explosion. With the completion of a central sewage system in the Accotink Creek Stream Valley, the last major barrier to high density development came down. New homes sprang up like mushrooms between the communities of Annandale and Fairfax along Little River Turnpike. Religious leaders concluded that this was visible evidence of “new people in new communities needing new churches.” Baptist congregations in the area, with their inherent missionary spirit, responded with a drive for new churches.

On June 1, 1958, fifty-four dedicated and adventurous persons met at the Fairfax Elementary School to begin a new Christian witness called the Little River Baptist Chapel. Those who met at the school that day read in the bulletin:

This ministry of worship and Christian teaching in Sunday School is being inaugurated by the Fairfax Baptist Church, through its mission committee, for the purpose of extending its Christian message to a wider area. It is confidently believed that this will lead to the development of a new Baptist Church between Fairfax and Annandale.

The next order of business for the new Christian community was to acquire the services of a minister. The church called the then Circulation Manager of *The Religious Herald*, the Reverend Dr. Joseph C. Hall, who began his ministry with the Chapel on October 26, 1958. Dr. Hall was a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and had received the Bachelor of Divinity and Doctor of Theology degrees from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He had held pastorates in Arkansas and Kentucky.

On September 10, 1959, just less than one year after its official organization, the Chapel formally declared itself constituted as a church. During that same week (September 13) the members selected Calvary Hill as the permanent name of the church. With eighty-two charter members, formal organizational services were held on October 4, 1959, at the Fairfax Baptist Church, from whence the mission had begun.

Eagerly seeking to strengthen its mission, the church acquired six acres of land at the corner of Little River Turnpike and Olley Lane on March 25, 1960. After an uncountable number of meetings which often lasted well into the night, many frustrations both large and small, and an ever increasing problem of space in the Fairfax Elementary School, the church dedicated the first unit of a proposed complex of three on June 2, 1963 -- the fifth anniversary of its first meeting.

The church burned the first trust on the property in November of 1961. The church was also pleased that month by having Bill Moyers, then Press Secretary for President Lyndon

Johnson, an ordained Baptist minister, and a member of the First Baptist Church of Alexandria, as speaker two different Sundays.

Calvary Hill grew rapidly from its very beginning; after the first building was completed, the growth in membership and attendance accelerated. It was not long after entering the building that dual worship services were begun to accommodate the growth in attendance. Average Sunday School attendance grew from 76 to 336 between 1959 and 1969.

High interest in a quality music program was an early feature of Calvary Hill's outlook. Dr. Hall's ministry beyond the membership enabled him to arrange the gift of an Allen Electronic organ by two prominent Missionary Physicians. Drs. Phillip and Jean Austin had been American Baptist missionaries in Africa and had settled in Alexandria during World War II. The organ was dedicated in June of 1963 with a recital by Mr. Robert Lee Layne.

The first building was dedicated in June of 1963 with Dr. Clarence Cranford, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Washington, DC preaching. Once in its own building Calvary Hill began to expand and develop its program, adding classes, teachers, committees and organizations. Soon the church was able to offer work and witness to all age groups in the surrounding community. The original hope of extending a Christian witness to a wider area and the belief that a church could be established between Fairfax and Annandale definitely had been realized.

The church has participated in a variety of Association-wide Missions Conferences over the last fifty years. Calvary Hill called its first full-time Education, Youth and Music Minister in 1964.

Over the years Calvary Hill has helped nurture those who have felt called to God's ministry. Dan O'Dell, who had joined the church with his family in 1959, was licensed to preach by the church in 1964 and subsequently pursued required education and was commissioned a Foreign Missionary by the Southern Baptist Convention. Dan has served with his wife and three children in Guadeloupe and Barbados at the Baptist College.

Carrington Bailey, son of a family long at the church, was ordained to the gospel ministry in 1980. Dwain Gregory, then Minister of Music, was ordained in 1981. Alex Martin, Minister of Music in the late '90s until 2003, was also ordained by Calvary Hill. John Budde was ordained to the Gospel Ministry in 2005. The church has also licensed William Johnson, Benny Phillips, Bruce Langwiser, Twyla Turner and Robyn Steele. Both Dwain Gregory and Alex Martin served as BSU directors in Northern Virginia while they were at Calvary Hill.

In January 1966, the membership received notice that its first pastor was leaving. Dr. Hall, after a loving ministry of more than seven years was closing his service to the church, bringing the end of an era in many respects.

Calvary Hill was able to maintain its witness through the period of searching for another pastor. The church responded to the challenge and in the summer of 1966 called the Reverend Jesse H. Parker as its pastor. The Reverend Parker was a graduate of the University of Richmond

and had received the Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Theology degrees from the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

During the five and one-half year ministry of the second pastor, the church continued to experience growth in numbers, in spirit and in affluence. The outreach of the church and its ministry had a significant impact on the community. Its Vacation Bible School ministry enrolled large numbers of children not otherwise connected to the church. Calvary Hill's openness to persons from a wide variety of religious backgrounds was an asset that expressed the practical ecumenicity of the times. Pastor Parker invested himself in an extensive counseling ministry which also had an impact for good on the community.

During this period, a significant part of the church chose to organize the Fairfax Circle Baptist Church where they emphasized more traditional forms of Baptist witness. Calvary Hill continued its ministry efforts and, despite the departure of a numerous constituency, was able to maintain its participation with notable spirit and numerical strength.

In June 1973, Dr. John Gustavson became pastor. A graduate of Penn State University, he received a Master of Theology and Doctor of Theology degrees from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He came to Calvary Hill from a pastorate in Lovettsville, Virginia. Because he had grown up in the Capitol Hill Metropolitan Baptist Church in Washington, DC, Dr. Gustavson was well equipped for ministry among the diverse, successful, affluent, and often rootless people from everywhere who came to live in the church's field of service.

During the '70s, there was a continuing burgeoning of the population. Large numbers of youth crowded the public schools. And the church reflected the community. Youth ministries were so important that despite inadequate facilities, the church employed a college student, Benny Phillips, to work with the young people. He was later licensed to the gospel ministry by the church and provided important leadership and direction for the youth ministries.

The church courageously faced the adversity of too many people / too little space, and its financial inability to build the next stage of the Master Plan for facilities envisioned when the first building was erected. In 1976, after agonizing over the impasse, the church elected what seemed to be a happy compromise. It altered the worship room, provided a large multi-purpose room adjacent to the sanctuary, and added some classroom space. The overcrowding was eased.

Because large numbers of the people reached by Calvary Hill at this time were not of Baptist backgrounds, the "Baptist Imprint" began to be watered down. The so-called "charismatic" influence played an ever increasing role in the style and manner in which the gospel was presented. An inevitable conflict arose between the members who were "born and bred" Baptists and those who were comfortable with the new direction. As a result, the Pastor attempted to lead the church out of cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention. That attempt lost by a narrow margin.

Pastor Gustavson and Mr. Phillips left, and once again a significant number of church members left the Calvary Hill Church. Some went with the Reverend Gustavson to begin a new church; others dispersed to a variety of neighboring churches.

An outstanding music program evolved through the years. The musicianship of those who served as volunteer leaders was exceptional. When the church was able to employ music leadership, the persons chosen were among the finest church musicians in the area. These included Colonel Wagner, Joe Clark, R.L. "Windy" Wetherington, Celia Bunyard, Allen Grant, Dwain Gregory, Doedy Polk, Lloyd Shupp, Alex Martin, Paul Lee, Ray Still, and David Troup. The outstanding choir under Mrs. Bunyard's direction was featured at an Annual Meeting of the Mount Vernon Baptist Association as well as an Associational WMU meeting. Mr. Grant's vocation in the music department at nearby W.T. Woodson high school opened the door to enlist large numbers of young people in the music program. Dwain Gregory, the first full-time Baptist Campus Minister for Northern Virginia, continued that youth orientation during his service as Minister of Music at Calvary Hill.

Accompanists who have served the church faithfully through the years include Grace Lovem, Dolores Ecklund, Ann Jacobs, Jeanne Gunning, Jan Mulvaney, Pearl Evans, Shawn Pearson, Susan Shafferman Byram, Virginia Axtell, Joanne Shupp, Teresa Martin, Sue Shaver, Robyn Steele, Shannon Starke, and currently Steve Brown.

The church has traditionally responded to the needs of its community within the framework of its basic mission. In 1974 a clothes closet was started to provide necessary clothing to the needy of the area. In 1977 a daily radio program was begun. And during the mid- 80's Calvary Hill began participation in the Woodson FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help) ministry. Calvary Hill was the host church for a food pantry ministry as well. (Other churches of several denominations made contributions to the clothes closet and food pantry.)

The library at the church has been of the highest quality. In 1963 a donation of shelves and books was made. Under the direction of Jane Carty, the library grew into a significant organ of the church. In 1983 it was dedicated as the Jane Carty Library, and it attained Merit Achievement in 1987. The church has had consistently excellent librarians through the years. Librarian Jeanne Woodside also served as a trainer and leader in both the local Baptist Association and the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

Through the years Calvary Hill has made a contribution to the training of Christian young people by employing them as summer interns or part-time staff. In turn, the church has been enriched by those who have served us. Tom Graves and his new bride served one summer and he progressed through significant pastorates and on to the presidency of the Baptist Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, which was established in 1990. Dr. Graves also spoke at the 35th anniversary celebration of the church.

John Byram served in 1979; Robin Quisenberry in 1980; David Adams in 1981. Mike Bradley was part-time Minister of Education and Youth in 1982. Jeanne Bailey was commissioned to serve as a summer missionary in Topeka, Kansas, in 1984. Beverly Lewis served as part-time

Associate Minister in 1985. Other Youth Ministers include William Johnson, Jerry Phillips, Dan O'Dell, David Mullins, Bruce Langwiser, Twyla Turner, Tom Lynch and Kevin Ly.

The Reverend David Henry was called as pastor and began his ministry in September 1978. A graduate of the University of Richmond, Reverend Henry received a Master of Divinity Degree from Southeastern Seminary in North Carolina and was certified as a Pastoral Counselor by the Virginia Baptist Hospital in Lynchburg, Virginia. He held several pastorates in Virginia, coming to Calvary Hill from Virginia Beach.

By the late '70s, youth who had crowded the church in earlier days had grown into young adults. Many moved away to find jobs and affordable homes. The changing demographics altered the community and the church. Calvary Hill became a gathering of mature people with few children and almost no youth. The excellent pulpit ministry of Pastor Henry and the quality music program enabled the church to maintain its ministry to these maturing adults. However, fewer people meant fewer dollars, even though the loan on the addition to the original building was paid off in 1983. Shrinking support curtailed the program and the outreach ministries. As a consequence of these factors, Calvary Hill approached its 35th anniversary with about the same number of people as it had in its first year.

In 1985 the church participated in a PACT study - an intensive long-range planning process. Tom Ratcliff was the PACT consultant. As a result the following mission statement was adopted:

Calvary Hill Baptist Church is a fellowship of believers in the gospel of Jesus Christ, committed to worshipping God with faithfulness and obedience; to discovering and using our spiritual gifts for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ; to developing and equipping the membership for ministry, and to providing love and care and to witness throughout the world, especially in our own community.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the church continued to make progress. In an effort to help the membership become more understanding and caring about each other, Koininia Groups, designed for fellowship, were begun. The members responded to an effort to computerize the office and this was done with significant contributions from several. The sanctuary, which had been turned sideways in the late 1970s building program, was restored to its original configuration and several beautification projects were completed.

As plans for the 35th anniversary celebration were coming to fruition, Pastor David Henry accepted a call to the Kentucky Baptist Church near his home community of Danville, Virginia. It was a sad farewell, softened by a celebration of 17 years of meaningful ministry.

A church history is not just a chronological account of events. There must be the attempt to recall the temper of the times, and the personality of the people. It is perhaps a part of the task to ask not just *what* happened – but also “What did what happened *mean*?”

Through the years, Calvary Hill has faced the challenge of uniting Christians of varied

backgrounds and ideas to work and witness as one body in Christ. It has not always been easy. But if there is to be a testimony that the church is the body of Christ – that it exists not in and of its own power but by the virtue of the love of Christ – then Calvary Hill might be an illustration.

1993 – 2008

CHAPTER 2: A Vibrant Christian Community

Sherrie Cherdak

In December 1993, Reverend Jim Paul Pittman was called to Calvary Hill. Jim received his BA from Mississippi College, and his Master of Divinity from Golden Gate Theological Seminary. His previous pastorate had been in San Francisco. With his wife Jamie and his daughter Lindsay, Jim brought youth and energy into the church. During his brief service at Calvary Hill, he encouraged the congregation in its vision of the mission of the church in Fairfax. He resigned in 1997 to accept a call to a church in Maryland. From 1997 to 1998, Calvary Hill had guest speakers and interim ministers as they searched for a pastor to shepherd the church.

Reverend Dr. Jeffrey G. Willetts was called to be pastor of Calvary Hill Baptist Church on March 1, 1998. Dr. Willetts graduated from Campbell University in 1985 with a BA in Religion and Philosophy. In 1988 he graduated from Yale University Divinity School with a MA in Religion. He earned his PhD in Philosophy from the University of Wales in 1997.

In his various fields of ministry he has served with the music ministry team *Crossroads*, touring the Mid-Atlantic States. From 1991 to 1997, he was a church planter, establishing Fair Oaks Baptist Church. In 1998 he became the Academic Dean of The John Leland Center for Theological Studies, a new Baptist Seminary near the nation's capital. He currently serves the seminary as Academic Dean/VP and is Associate Professor of Divinity. Dr. Willetts is married to Reverend Elizabeth Willetts and has three teenage children, Andrew, Rebekah, and Jordan.

Reverend Elizabeth (Beth) Willetts is a native of South Wales in the United Kingdom. She received her theological training and ministry education from South Wales Baptist College and Cardiff University. Beth has served in pastoral positions in both Wales and the United States. She has served in various ministry positions at Calvary Hill Baptist Church for the last eight years and is currently Associate Pastor.

During the past 10 years, Pastor Jeff has led the congregation of Calvary Hill Baptist Church in Christian love and fellowship.

Pastor Jeff was granted a six-month sabbatical from April 1, 2005, to September 30, 2005. Rev. John Budde was named as Interim Minister.

In 2005, the money was raised and a new roof was put on the church.

A dinner was held in June 2005 to honor Joyce Shafferman, David MacClary, and Marie Tomlinson, three longtime members who were all moving away from the area.

In January 2005, David Troup became the Music Director. David is the driving force behind a nonprofit organization called QUEST MUSIC, and was a member of the U.S. Air Force Singing Sergeants. His dynamic leadership has provided an excellent music program. He has organized

and performed in many concerts at the church, bringing in a number of his musician friends from the community. David's wife, Dorothy Kingston, often contributes her singing talents and time to musical performances at Calvary Hill.

Dr. Stephen Brown came to Calvary Hill as Church Musician in 2007. He holds a Master's Degree in Music History from SUNY Buffalo and a Doctorate in Vocal Accompanying from Catholic University. Dr. Brown is on the piano faculty of George Washington University. Dr. Brown's wife performed various operatic arias in concert at Calvary Hill accompanied by her husband.

The musical Willetts family contributes their talents to the Calvary Hill music program as well. Beth and Jeff sing in the choir, daughter Rebekah is a soloist, and son Andy plays guitar, as does Jeff.

Recognition Night in June 2006 honored the service of Bob Woodside and Frank Winn.

In 2006, a ministry was begun to provide sandwiches once a month to the Lamb Center, which serves the poor and homeless.

Jeanne Woodside, John Gallagher, and Gladys Newcomb were honored at a Recognition Night in June 2007.

Also in 2007, a grand piano was donated to the church, and the church library book inventory was computerized.

As a mission-minded church, Calvary Hill has close ties to NorthStar Church Network, Baptist World Alliance, and The John Leland Center for Theological Studies. Calvary Hill had become a sister church to the fledgling Golgotha Baptist Church in Moscow, Russia. In 1999, several members of Calvary Hill made a trip to Moscow to help the Russian congregation build their church. Several more trips were made to Moscow to assist the new church, and to provide clothing and other resources for the children at an orphanage supported by the church.

Over its 50 years, the church has provided help for a variety of families in our area. A Cuban refugee family was assisted to relocate to the Northern Virginia area in the 1960s. In similar fashion during the 1980s, the church invited a Vietnamese family to live in a house on the church's property, which had once been used for Sunday School classrooms and Wednesday night missions group meetings. After the family was able to acquire its own home, the building, which needed many repairs, was torn down.

Calvary Hill has many fellowship and ministry activities. There is an annual Easter Sunrise Service, followed by an Easter breakfast provided by the Deacons. Easter worship service is followed by an Easter egg hunt for the children. An anniversary picnic is held each year on the Sunday nearest June 1. The Fall Festival is held annually with many activities for children and adults. Church members provide a "Living Nativity" for the community during the Christmas season.

Some of our many ongoing ministries include Helping Hands, a popular program for adults with Downs Syndrome. The Young At Heart Group for seniors provides a variety of monthly

activities for its members, such as trips to Sight and Sound in Pennsylvania, coffee mornings, movies, and music entertainment. On Wednesday nights a dinner is held at the church, followed by Bible study. Twice a month, there are visitations to the Leewood Nursing Home.

The Preschool Program is an important part of Calvary Hill. Begun as a “Mothers’ Day Out” program in the late 1970s, it has had many talented and capable directors over the years: Vauda Lee Skinner, Gladys Newcomb, Jeanie Fath, Nancy Lusk, Anne Smith, Ruth Muhlbauer, Linda Reams, and Lola Hollenbec, who is currently serving as the Director.

The Youth Program and activities have also been growing, with participation in several week-long summer mission trips. Tom Lynch served as Youth Coordinator during 2006-2007. Kevin Ly is currently the Youth Director.

During the past 15 years, Calvary Hill has hosted several other congregations in the building, including Evergreen Korean and Iglesia Bautista La Gran Comisión. In 2007, Calvary Hill and Iglesia Bautista were the first churches in the NorthStar Church Network to co-host a Vacation Bible School in both Spanish and English.

At the time of its 50th anniversary, once again the church is exploring how it can be more involved in the community through the construction of a Family Life and Ministry Center on the property.

After 50 years, Calvary Hill Baptist Church is still a vibrant Christian community under the leadership of the Reverends Jeff and Beth Willetts.

Born through the work and effort of a diverse and dedicated people, this church continues to point to the cross of Calvary Hill and celebrates the empty tomb of Easter. The living Christ who called Calvary Hill Baptist Church together now leads us into a future filled with promise and possibility.

2008-2018

CHAPTER 3: A Can-Do Congregation

Kitty Shaw-Gardner

Calvary Hill Baptist Church entered its sixth decade with energy and optimism following a gala celebration of its 50th anniversary. Seven hundred and fifty announcements had been sent out to current and former members across the country, and over 200 attended the festive banquet held at the Marriott Hotel in Fair Oaks on May 31, 2008.

The congregation was justifiably proud of its past accomplishments and full of hopes for future growth. It was a time of ambitious plans for outreach efforts, a time to lay the groundwork for sharing the Gospel with more people inside and outside the sanctuary's walls.

Steps toward that goal had already been taken in Church Council meetings during the previous year. Based on the design of a church ministry complex in Holder Beach, North Carolina, where the youth group had stayed during a recent mission trip, Sr. Pastor Jeff Willetts and Youth Director David Brooks proposed the construction of a similar multipurpose Family Life and Ministry Center on Calvary Hill's six-acre property in Fairfax. They felt it would be a tremendous asset both to Calvary Hill and to other churches in the region. It was suggested that resources from the 50th Anniversary Fund could be used to finance initial estimates for the cost of the project.

In June 2008, presentation documents from an architect were displayed in the Fellowship Hall. Costs for the proposed Ministry Center ranged from \$650,000 to \$800,000, and the Budget and Finance Committee began exploring ways to pay for such a major undertaking.

At the same time, considerable efforts were made to enhance the exterior of the church and the landscaping as an attractive way to welcome both newcomers and long-standing members. According to church records, Ken Moreland, Ellen and Casey Albert, and David Troup took the lead in completing these improvements, which also included painting the outside of the building. Since then, new exterior doors were installed throughout the building, sidewalks were replaced, and the steps from the upper parking lot down to the side door were upgraded. The Garden of Meditation near the main entrance to the church was donated and built by E. B. Vandiver, Rick Hudson, and Bob Peterson from 2015-2017. Plaques in memory of their parents were attached to benches placed under the ornamental cherry tree that has been in that location since the addition to the church building was completed in 1976. Other members of the congregation are welcome to add plaques as well.

Extensive renovations on the inside of the church were also made with an eye towards leaving a good impression on first-time visitors. A Welcome Table was placed inside the front entrance, and new carpeting was installed in the hall leading to the sanctuary and throughout the upper level. Wood floors were laid in several areas including the Youth Room and the Main Office, and framed artwork was later hung on the walls outside the sanctuary, a donation from Robert and Dana Pristach in 2015.

Dividers between the sanctuary and the Fellowship Hall came down in 2010 to create a more open feeling. The water-stained ceiling of the Fellowship Hall was replaced, and new lighting was installed in both areas to brighten the space. During 2010-2012, the cinderblock walls were covered with sheet rock and painted a soft yellow, and 10 colorful fabric panels were hung that look like stained glass windows. The focal point of the enlarged sanctuary space is still the blue stained glass window above the choir loft. But it became even more striking with the addition of a large yellow-and-gold stained glass cross, a gift from Vivian_Gravitte in memory of her husband Dwight who passed away in 2003.

In addition to these improvements in the appearance and security of the church building, congregational leaders also considered potential changes to the worship service itself. The goal was to appeal to younger visitors, while not alienating older members who were more comfortable with traditional Baptist ways of doing church. Adding a second service on Sunday mornings, which included contemporary music and greater participation of the youth, had been tried in 2001. Although popular at first, it was cancelled two years later because of falling attendance.

From the beginning, Calvary Hill's music program has been acknowledged as one of its greatest strengths and potential drawing cards. After the departure of Music Director David Troup in 2010, Pastor Jeff – also a talented musician – stepped in to fill the gap as choir director, although the situation was hardly ideal for such a busy pastor. As they say, however -- when one door closes another door opens. Before long, Calvary Hill found a way to both restore its choral music program and to increase its outreach to new members.

This happened in June 2011, when the congregation welcomed the new Worship Team. Since then, this 3-piece praise band has opened the worship service every Sunday with vibrant contemporary praise songs, accompanied by church members David Brooks and Rachel Cherdak. Lyrics are printed in the church bulletin, so everyone can easily sing along. During the rest of the service, Church Musician Dr. Stephen Brown continues to provide piano accompaniment for traditional hymns and responses, and for anthems by the choir. He often plays his own moving offertory selections as well. Most people would agree that it's a "happy marriage" – a unique way to combine both traditional and contemporary elements in the same worship service.

Rev. Trisha Miller Manarin began leading the church choir as a volunteer in 2014 and was asked to officially join the staff as Choir Director soon thereafter. Rev. Manarin, who holds a D.Min. in Leadership Excellence from Wesley Theological Seminary, is well qualified for the position, and Calvary Hill is fortunate to have her. "It was our children who chose Calvary Hill," she recalls. "We were visiting a number of churches and my husband Tim and I thought we'd probably join a larger church. But the kids said they wanted to be at Calvary Hill, so that was it."

As the psalmist wrote so long ago, "Out of the mouth of babes..." Perhaps what young Peter, Nathaniel, and Maggie felt so strongly is that -- although the church is small -- it has a very big heart. And this is exactly the message the congregation has tried so energetically to convey to the larger community over the past 10 years.

From the beginning of their ministry in 1998, Sr. Pastor Dr. Jeffrey Willetts and his wife Rev. Elizabeth Willetts worked as an inexhaustible team to educate, stimulate, motivate, mentor and – most importantly – to accompany church members as they grew in their knowledge and understanding of what it truly means to be a Christian. They led by tireless example, with Pastor Beth taking on a larger share of the work at Calvary Hill as Pastor Jeff’s academic and leadership responsibilities grew at the John Leland Center for Theological Studies, where he also served as Vice President and Academic Dean.

Pastor Beth joined the staff as Family Minister in 2001. She officially became Co-Pastor in 2015 in recognition of her tremendous contribution to the church and for her support of the spiritual life of the congregation. Rev. Ruth Muhlbauer, who had been ordained by Calvary Hill in 2011, was hired as Associate Pastor in 2012 to work especially with senior adults. Together, the three of them formed a strong, effective core of leadership.

While the pastoral staff always remained focused on the spiritual needs of the congregation, there was also a notable emphasis on creative outreach efforts during this period. It was not, however, an easy task. It was by now the 21st Century – people were different and family life had changed in so many ways. And the younger generation – with their ubiquitous electronic devices – seemed harder than ever to engage. In other parts of the country, some churches had started to open Starbucks kiosks in their buildings to draw people in. *Could Calvary Hill try something like that?*

The answer was a resounding “Yes, we can!” And so, on Saturday evening, May 31, 2014, the first Calvary Hill Coffee House and Open Mic Nite was launched to rave reviews. These well-attended events are scheduled quarterly and, along with the requisite coffee, sweet treats and healthy snacks are also available – all free of charge. A small stage was built by David and Lisa Brooks in the back of the Fellowship Hall, and a sound system with colored lights was loaned to the church by Pete Cowett, the leader of Calvary Hill’s Praise Band. The group, including Pete on lead guitar and banjo, his wife Jennifer on cajón and djembe drum, and Brian Anderson on base and mandolin, leads off each Coffee House session. Other performers have included members of the congregation showing off assorted talents, several of Pete’s music students who are always glad to have a venue, and absolute strangers – which, of course, is one of the main objectives. “It’s really a wonderful way to reach people in and out of the church for fellowship and music,” said Pete.

Hoping to appeal to classical music lovers as well as those who favor coffee house performances, Dr. Brown launched a series of concerts a few months later featuring chamber music and solo piano recitals. “I really appreciate the support of Calvary Hill in making the sanctuary available for these performances and for organizing the post-concert receptions,” he said. “It could help increase our numbers – and perhaps even recruit more singers for our choir.” The latest in this series will be *Music and the Arthurian Nights*, scheduled for June 2018.

Another example of creative programming involves the annual Prayers for Pets ceremony. After holding the popular event outside for several years, Pastor Beth decided to move the

activity inside the building to the Fellowship Hall. *“Can we really do that? What about ‘accidents’?”* people asked. *“Of course we can!”* – with volunteers standing by to hand out paper towels when needed. It was a perfect way to draw participants into the building for them to have a look around.

Even the annual Easter Egg Hunt, which began in 1999, was tweaked over the years for greater visibility to the community. At first, 300-400 brightly colored plastic eggs were tossed around the grounds where they could easily be seen by the younger children – and also by passersby on Little River Turnpike. *“Can we have even more eggs?”* asked Pastor Jeff. *“Of course we can!”* was the reply, and the number was immediately doubled. Now, anyone driving past the property on Easter morning can only marvel at the blizzard of colored eggs covering the grass and wonder what other interesting things might be happening at that little church. Which, of course, was the main idea.

This can-do approach carries over into other church activities as well. *Can we have stunning floral arrangements on the altar every Sunday even if we have very little money to pay for them? Of course we can!* -- if the chair of the Flower Committee is someone like Mary Ritenour. She has been adding arrays of blossoms from her own garden to enhance those she buys commercially for the past 25 years.

Can we share our church building with two other congregations every Sunday and several nights a week? Of course we can! – and have been doing so for decades. All it takes is effective planning and coordination. Iglesia Bautista La Gran Comisión has called Calvary Hill its home for almost 20 years, and the Korean congregation, Seng Myung Presbyterian Church, has held services in the building since 2013.

This sense of confidence and optimism defined the church’s outlook for the better part of the past 10 years. Despite ongoing challenges such as tight budgets, an air conditioning system that defied repair, and losses of key leadership when several families relocated -- there was always the certainty that -- with God’s help -- Calvary Hill could continue to make a difference in peoples’ lives.

As in any Baptist church, Christian Education at Calvary Hill has always been taken seriously, and Sunday School for children, youth, and adults is an essential part of the life of the church. From the beginning, men’s and women’s Bible study classes have met in traditional small groups. However, in 2008 something new was introduced called the Discipleship Forum. Led by Pastor Ruth, the group meets in the Fellowship Hall and welcomes both men and women. There are no specific materials for the class. Rather, participants take a closer look at the scripture passages upon which the previous Sunday’s sermon was based. To make things easier for people to remember, the church bulletin now includes a section called “Notes to Myself from Worship.” However, for those who prefer a more standard Bible study class, there are also two small groups -- the Men’s Class, led by Russell Goings, and the Women’s Class, led by Colleen Turner.

The Women's Class recently put together Welcome Bags filled with small items -- including a Calvary Hill pen and key chain, and an information booklet—to give to visitors to help them learn more about the congregation. “Several outreach efforts like this were mentioned at the Women's Retreat last year,” said Colleen. “It would have been so easy for the initiative to have stayed just a ‘good idea.’ But instead, the Women's Class invested their time and talents to make it a reality.”

Beth Ann Velo, assisted by Carolyn Kramer and Maxine Smith, took over the children's Sunday School class when it was restructured in the summer of 2017. Between Carolyn and Maxine, they have 62 years of experience teaching the youngsters at Calvary Hill, some of whom have married and had their own children by now. “Enrollment numbers overall and by age groups have fluctuated over the years due to people moving away or no longer attending Calvary Hill,” said Carolyn. “The current solution to the elementary-age class has been one teacher with two helpers who alternate months, and who can serve as subs when needed.”

A highlight of the 11 o'clock worship service is Kids' Time, when youngsters are called up to the front of the sanctuary for a moment when words of wisdom are shared with young and old alike. The focus of these mini-sermons is the “Happy Sack,” which was introduced years ago by Pastor Beth as part of her Family Ministry. Each week a different child is given the colorful bag in which to hide a favorite or unusual object. Then the following Sunday during Kids' Time, the child returns the sack to the pastor, who must come up with a spiritual message on the spot, somehow inspired by what the child has hidden in the bag. The results are often humorous and provide a “teachable moment” that is enjoyed by the entire congregation. Later, during the “grown-up” sermon, the children leave the sanctuary to participate in Kids on the Hill and Little Tots activities, led by Ellen Albert and other volunteers.

Sunday School programming for the youth has also depended on the number of young people in the congregation at the time. During 2004-2011, there was an active Youth Group led much of that time by Youth Pastor Kevin Ly, who was ordained by Calvary Hill in 2010. This large cohort of young people came up together through preschool, elementary, and high school. As they graduated, however, attendance began to drop and the church van that had been purchased in 2000 began to sit idle. Eventually, the Sunday School class for youth was discontinued. Numbers were back up by 2013, however, and the youth began to meet again on Sunday mornings, led by David and Lisa Brooks. “There was a period when there was no group at all, no teens,” recalled David and Lisa. “Now we have a small but powerful young group that continues to grow.”

Summer mission trips have always been popular and well attended, and they continue to be an important part of the Calvary Hill's Youth Program. Recent trips took the youth to North Carolina to work with Passport and to Pennsylvania to participate in Team Effort activities. During the summer of 2018, they will travel to Gatlinburg, Tennessee, to once again serve with Team Effort.

Like Sunday School classes, Summer Vacation Bible School has undergone changes at Calvary Hill over the past 10 years. Beginning in 2008, VBS was offered as a one-day children's festival rather than a traditional week-long camp. For 2018, however, Calvary Hill has joined with

Fairfax Baptist Church to host a week-long VBS program called Splash Canyon, with activities related to water-themed Bible stories. In response to changing family schedules, however, the program will be held in the evening when more volunteers are available to help.

Nonagenarian Jeanne Woodside continues to run Calvary Hill's highly-respected library, which houses a wealth of educational resources. The collection, which she has managed since 1983, now contains over 2000 volumes. As quickly as new material is acquired, it is added to the online catalogue. Kids on the Hill classes visit the library regularly and, as a new form of outreach, church member Karen Huff often checks out books to share with the youngsters in her home-based childcare program.

Calvary Hill's connections to the Leland Center through Pastor Jeff have also had an impact on the level and quality of Calvary Hill's Christian Education Program. With his encouragement, a number of church members have taken classes at Leland over the years, several of whom have gone on to be licensed and ordained. They continue to share what they learn at the seminary with members of the congregation in many ways.

Always an essential part of Baptist life, mission work is supported at Calvary on both the local and the international levels. In December 2014, Dave Tomkinson proposed that the church make a 2-year grant to assist Go-Inland-Missions-Ministry, an evangelical team sharing the gospel on Java and throughout Indonesia that he had been involved with since 2006. The initiative was funded, and in 2016 Dave went to Indonesia to visit the group as a representative of the congregation. The height of the trip for him was speaking at a women's conference in Sumatra in front of an audience of 300. "I spoke on discipleship," he recalled, "and on the mission of mothers, and fathers, to raise their children as disciples of Christ."

In 2015, the church hosted the annual meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (MACBF), and since then has participated more closely with this ministry. Calvary Hill's Choir Director Rev. Trisha Manarin is the Executive Coordinator of MACBF, and through her the congregation was introduced to the ministry of Refuge and Hope, a group in Uganda that provides professional development training for refugees living in that country. In 2016 and again in 2017, Calvary Hill co-sponsored the Great Obstacle Race, a family-friendly obstacle course that raises awareness and funds in support of Refuge and Hope. In 2017, Trisha was joined by three others, including Dave Tomkinson, on a mission trip to Kampala, Uganda's capital city, to assist the group.

The congregation also supports the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), the NorthStar Church Network, and the Cooperative Program of the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV).

Calvary Hill continues to serve the needs of the local community in many ways as well, although as the congregation has become smaller – and grown older – it has gotten harder to recruit volunteers for some activities. Visits to the Leewood Health Center are no longer being made, but the Helping Hands ministry stills meets once a month to serve adults with special needs. Participants and volunteers alike enjoy an evening of food, fun, and fellowship together, made even livelier when the Praise Band has dropped by.

Regrettably, the church Food Pantry was closed in 2005. “We were supported by hugely successful community food drives,” recalled Linda Austin, who managed the pantry at that time. “Unfortunately, given the decreasing number of volunteers and the ever increasing volume of food items – it was impossible to continue.” As a result, arrangements were made for donations to be sent to the Food for Others warehouse in nearby Merrifield. For the past 13 years, church members have collected items that are taken to Food for Others on the first Sunday of every month – a total donation by now of some 6,500 pounds of food. Contributions are also made to the Lamb Center, a non-profit organization serving the poor and homeless in the Fairfax area that Calvary Hill has supported since the mid-1990s. More recently, the congregation became a supporting member of the Shepherd’s Center of Fairfax-Burke, which provides a variety of services to seniors in the community.

In addition, several church-based groups have found ways to use their talents in service to others. Ten years ago Shirley Havens started Card Creators, a group that gets together regularly to hand craft an assortment of unsigned greeting cards which are then donated to military personnel overseas. In addition to creating and sending out over 2,000 handmade cards by now, the ministry also provides a comfortable setting for fellowship among the volunteers as they do their crafting. For those who would rather knit or crochet, a longstanding ladies group makes lap robes in appropriate sizes for wheel chairs and scooters. These items are included in Christmas baskets distributed by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging. And for those who prefer the culinary arts, Busy Bakers was formed in 2012 to prepare and deliver baked goods to local police and first responder firefighters every month.

One of the most important and oft used places in any Baptist church is the kitchen, and in 2014 Calvary Hill’s cooking area began a major update, facilitated by a \$1,400 grant from the NorthStar Church Network to purchase a new oven. Among numerous improvements, walls were reconfigured in one area creating room for a large table and set of chairs. When Leland student Mike Stanton first saw the pleasant space, he thought it was the ideal spot to hold a weekday morning “Coffee Fellowship.” Others agreed, and during 2015 a small group met there that would not otherwise have been in the church at that time of day.

Fellowship may not be the main reason people visit a church the first time, but it is certainly something that brings them back. From donuts on Sunday mornings to dinners on Wednesday nights, from joyful baptism receptions to somber funeral luncheons – fellowship is a vital part of what has nourished – both physically and spiritually – the congregation for the past 60 years. During the last decade, milestone occasions -- such as the wedding of Maynard and Theresa Willard in 2015, the 100th birthday party for RubINETTE Dunaway in 2017, the promotion ceremony for Coast Guard Captain Adam Morrison in 2017, and the ordinations of Ruth Muhlbauer in 2011 and Anne Smith in 2015 – have brought church members even closer together as a family. Smaller events such as quarterly Fellowship Lunches, summer ice cream socials, and even something as simple as gathering to take down Christmas decorations in the sanctuary after the holidays and then ordering a pizza provide special opportunities for members of the church family to stay in touch.

Senior adults at Calvary Hill are a significant, vibrant part of the congregation, participating actively in all aspects of church life including ministries, Bible study, and church leadership. The Lunch Bunch has met twice monthly since 2005 for a variety of group activities followed by good conversation over a brown bag lunch. In 2015 the popular Christian Yoga program was introduced by Colleen Turner. These one-hour strengthening and stretching classes include both men and women, and are open to the community. The recently organized DVD Study Group began in 2017 with a six-week series on the film *The Shack*. “It was a wonderful opportunity to think about our relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit,” said Colleen, who leads this group as well. Catherine Dellinger attended the series and added, “The conversations between the main character and the different actors representing God really made an impression on me. And the movie also had a lot to say about guilt and forgiveness.”

The church office was staffed four days a week by volunteers during much of the past decade, including Dee Lewis, Carrol Cole, and Jeanne Woodside. Jenny Raymer was hired as Administrative Assistant in 2014. One of her most valuable contributions was reviving the church newsletter – *The Calvary Connection* – which went online in November 2017. It had not been published regularly since 2005, when it was put out by former church member Pam Troutman. Jenny also keeps the church website attractive and up-to-date, and lends an important hand as an unofficial technology specialist when other staff members and volunteers need assistance.

In June 2017, the congregation welcomed Colleen Turner as a staff member in a newly created position: Congregational Social Worker. In this role, Colleen continues her significant volunteer activities at Calvary Hill, plus spends five hours per week representing the church in the community, as well as an additional five hours per week doing case management within the congregation. In exchange, Colleen is allowed to use office space in the church for four or five hours per week for her own private practice.

“Can we do something like that?” people asked when Colleen first suggested the idea. “Yes we can!” was the answer at a Business Meeting in June 2017 when the congregation voted unanimously to accept her innovative proposal. The arrangement offers both a way to provide valuable services and to draw new people into the building.

The most significant administrative changes made during 2008-2018 were related to Church Council, the group that recommends actions to be voted on by the entire congregation at Business Meetings. During most of Calvary Hill’s history, this important decision-making body included the chairs of all the standing committees in the church. By 2004, the number of these committees had grown to 30, many of which were “ministries” rather than actual committees, and it was challenging for such a large group to work together effectively. For the sake of expediency, the composition of the Council gradually changed over time. As a result, at a Business Meeting in 2009, Pastor Jeff reported that an ad hoc committee had been formed to draft amendments to Calvary Hill’s Constitution to reflect the reality of current church practices. As he explained at the following Business Meeting, “The goal of this effort was not to eliminate ministries, but rather to streamline the committee system to be more in line with the

size of the church.” The recommended changes to the Constitution were approved with one dissenting vote.

The Church Council and its leadership structure continued to evolve, however. For this reason, Pastor Jeff called for another ad hoc committee in 2012 to draft additional changes in constitutional language that were needed at that time. There was a considerable delay, but at the Business Meeting in March 2016 the revisions suggested by that committee were brought to a vote and approved by the congregation.

Despite energetic and creative outreach efforts, sustainable growth in the size of the congregation remained elusive during this 10-year period. For example, Pastor Beth lamented the lack of sufficient adult volunteers to staff important church activities at a Business Meeting in December 2012. But then there were good times, such as in June 2014 when Pastor Jeff reported that 16 new families had started attending Calvary Hill over the past 18 months.

Based on church records, average weekly attendance in 2008 was 92.5. It peaked at 97.8 in 2015, and then began to drop again. This in turn had an impact on the annual budget, since lower attendance also results in lower giving. Shortfalls at the end of several years during this period had to be covered by withdrawals from the church’s operating reserves account. An external audit completed in 2017 found the church’s financial books in order. However, it was apparent that supporting a wide range of programs and ministries, as well as maintaining an aging building were becoming increasingly more difficult.

During these years, the church considered several possible options to insure its financial sustainability. Steps were taken towards a merger with United Baptist Church in 2012, and a shared ministry with Parkwood Baptist was discussed in 2013. Neither concept, however, went much beyond the exploratory stages. Hopes were raised again in 2014 when meetings were held with Habitat for Humanity to consider the possibility of the church giving Habitat three acres of its property in exchange for Habitat building the long-awaited Family Life and Ministry Center for Calvary Hill. Ultimately, the project got lost in a tangle of red tape at the Fairfax County level. After that, the church was approached by Brightview Developers in 2016. The group was interested in purchasing two acres of Calvary Hill’s property as well as an adjoining parcel belonging to City Gates Church to build a retirement center. However, negotiations ended in March 2017 when City Gates indicated it did not want to sell any of its land at that time.

Calvary Hill’s location is indeed a valuable asset, and its visibility at the intersection of Little River Turnpike and Olley Lane has always been perfect for outreach efforts such as the Great Obstacle Race and the annual Fall Festival, when people are drawn in by the music of the Praise Band and the many admission-free activities. For a number of years, a flower vendor has rented space from the church, and his brightly colored hanging baskets and other flowering plants draw additional attention to that corner.

The well-located church also provides meeting space for a number of other community organizations. For over 25 years, both the Wanna Bees quilting group and the Thursday night

AA Meeting have gathered weekly at Calvary Hill. Newer organizations meeting at the church include the Every Caregivers Support Group and the Domestic Violence Support Group.

So... If Calvary Hill has such a great location, with superlative pastors, a remarkable music program, a variety of ministries and programs for all ages, plus an overriding emphasis on fellowship – why aren't more people filling the pews on Sunday mornings? It has been a persistent question for a number of years, and a cause for prayerful consideration.

The first Sunday after the Christmas holidays is always a special time for church members to reconnect, and it was no exception on January 3, 2016. Pastor Jeff preached a typically inspiring sermon that morning, but then something unusual happened after he said the benediction. He asked Pastor Beth to join him in the front of the sanctuary to make an announcement. The congregation sat in silence as they heard that over the holidays, their Senior Pastor had been offered the position of Dean of the McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University in Atlanta, Georgia. He said the decision had been very difficult but he had accepted the offer, and would be leaving Virginia in June, after going on one last summer mission trip with the Youth Group. Pastor Beth would join him one month later. Although pleased for their beloved pastors – the congregation's sense of loss was profound. And unfortunately, the bad news was just beginning.

During a Business Meeting later that Spring, it was announced that the Calvary Hill Preschool Program, which had served the Fairfax community and enlivened the church with children's laughter since 1978, would have to close its doors permanently at the end of May. The number of students had dropped precipitously over the past two years and only 16 children were enrolled for the following September, which was unsustainable. Making things worse, there was a problem with drainage in that part of the building and ground water was seeping into the foundation. Repairs would be expensive.

Those repairs, however, were only the tip of the iceberg. A comprehensive Building Study completed in March 2018 showed that an estimated \$250,000 in repairs and replacements would be needed over the next 10 years to maintain the building's mechanical structure, roof, and several other items. It was a staggering amount of money for a small congregation to contemplate, especially while still coming to terms with the departure of Pastors Jeff and Beth.

Calvary Hill had been through the pastoral search process six times before during the life of the church, and the assumption was that the procedure would be the same again this time: A search committee would be formed; an interim pastor would be named; candidates would be interviewed; and soon enough – a senior pastor would be called to lead the congregation into a new era of prosperity and growth. To the disappointment of many, it would take much longer than expected.

The Pastoral Search Committee – which included Janet Anderson, Linda Austin, David Brooks, Bart Kramer, Ken Moreland, Colleen Turner, and Beth Ann Velo at that time – began its

work by recommending to the congregation that Rev. Dr. Gerald Young be called as Interim Senior Pastor effective July 1, 2016. At a Business Meeting several months later, the Search Committee also recommended that the church commit to the Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM) Process, which provides the framework for a congregation to clarify its identity and mission, thus enhancing the likelihood that a new pastor would be called whose vision is compatible with that of the congregation, and who would be excited to join in carrying out its mission.

It was also noted that the IIM process, which includes five Focus Areas, could take 12-18 months to complete before the interviewing of pastoral candidates would begin. As Pastor Young explained, “The desired outcome of the IIM process is for a congregation to systematically examine itself, explore its community, identify its ministry opportunities, and to listen to the Spirit lead them to an understanding of God’s call into the future.”

“*Can we go through such a lengthy process of self-reflection?*” the Committee members asked. “*Of course we can!*” responded the congregation, and the recommendation was approved.

With input from church members, the Pastoral Search Committee – renamed the IIM Transition Team – met regularly over the following year to define the congregation’s Core Values and its Mission, which together form the foundation of its new Vision Statement. The statement, which was approved by the church in June 2017, reads as follows:

Understanding that we are Christ’s presence in the world, it is Calvary Hill’s vision to become a congregation that is continually impacting the community by helping God’s kingdom grow in and through us. We recognize each individual’s responsibility to grow in Christ, follow wherever God might lead, intentionally build relationships, and seek and create opportunities to humbly and selflessly serve.

Once the Mission Statement was agreed upon, the Transition Team then proposed a new system of Congregational Teams that would work together efficiently to help carry it out. The composition of Church Council was then modified to reflect the new committee structure, and necessary amendments to the Constitution were approved in the Fall of 2017.

“Delineating areas of responsibility for smoother operations and more-timely decision making was a big accomplishment,” said Janet Anderson, who chairs the restructured Church Council. “Keeping things going after Jeff and Beth left is something I am proud of us for handling fairly seamlessly, although it was a huge challenge.”

At the same time, before the final details of the Vision Statement and the newly formed Congregational Teams had been worked out, church members were finding ways to put the Statement into practice. In early 2017 former church member Adam Morrison contacted nearby Little Run Elementary School to see if there were ministry opportunities that Calvary Hill could undertake. He learned that there was a real need for school supplies for children from low income families. As a result, the church organized its first “Binder Drive,” collecting not only binders and dividers, but also numerous other supplies in time for the first days of school that following September.

Once contact with the school had been made, a long-term opportunity to serve was identified as well. The school counselor said there was a critical need for more Power Packs, bags of nutritious food items that are sent home with children who otherwise might not have enough to eat on weekends when they don't have access to meals at school. And thus Calvary Hill's new Power Pack Ministry was launched. The congregation made a commitment to Little Run to provide 30 Power Packs per month for the 2017-18 school year, as well as extras for holiday breaks and long weekends. Congregational support, including food donations and assistance with assembling and delivering the packs to Little Run, has been very high.

In addition, the church also began working with another local community organization, the Fairfax County Kinship Care Institute, to minister to the needs of "kinship families" – relatives and family friends who have stepped up to provide care and support to children whose parents are unable to do so. Beginning in April 2018, one Wednesday Night Dinner each month for six months will become a Kinship Café, an opportunity for Calvary Hill's children, youth, and adults to share a complimentary meal, craft activities – and more importantly – fellowship with participating kinship families.

During this active period of ministry outreach, the church also started to provide local support for Joni and Friends, a faith-based organization in California that sponsors Wheels for the World. This ambitious program facilitates the donation of refurbished wheelchairs, walkers, canes, and crutches to those affected by disability around the world. Here in Fairfax, Calvary Hill volunteers help in many ways, such as seeking donations of assistive devices from groups in the area, picking them up, and delivering them to a Joni and Friends storage unit in Burke. When the restored wheel chairs and other items reach their final destinations, each recipient also receives a Bible in his or her own language.

It could be just a coincidence that as soon as the congregation stated that its vision is to seek "*opportunities to humbly and selflessly serve*" – then these opportunities for ministry within the community come up so quickly. Or perhaps it is a sign that it's time now for Calvary Hill to look outward toward the community, rather than trying to draw people into the church as it has done in the past.

Kay Cumbie wrote in Chapter 1 of this history that the founders' goal in 1958 was to bring a new church to new people in new communities between Annandale and Fairfax City. What's needed in 2018 might be a new kind of church at that prime location. Should Calvary Hill -- the can-do congregation that was strong enough to survive two difficult splits and courageous enough to ordain women ahead of its time – consider making a change in that direction? Despite many prayers and conversations, both public and private, no clear answer has emerged.

Earlier this Spring, Calvary Hill celebrated combined Easter services with Fairfax Baptist Church, where this history began 60 years ago. As the Pentacost season continued, the congregation found itself awaiting the call of a new pastor and seriously contemplating the possibilities for its own transformation and rebirth.

Chapter 3 -- SOURCE MATERIALS

CHBC Documents, Publications, and Online Resources:

CHBC Attendance Records: 2008-2017

CHBC Business Meeting Minutes: Jan. 2000 - Dec. 2017

CHBC Church Council Minutes: Jan. 2000 - Dec.2017

CHBC Heritage Timeline 1958 – 2016, compiled Fall 2017

CHBC Newsletter -- *The Calvary Connection*: November 2017 – April 2018

CHBS Pamphlets and Church Bulletins: January – April 2018

“Consolidations of Church History Presentations” – given during worship services on Jan 8, 15, 22, and 27, 2016

CHBC Website: www.calvaryhillbc.org

Other Documents:

“CHBC Church History Update Questionnaire” – completed by pastors and other staff members, Deacons, Church Council members, committee members and chairs, ministry leaders and volunteers, Sunday School teachers, and IIM Transition Team members.

“History: Calvary Hill Baptist Church, Fairfax, Virginia.” Research paper by Anne M. Smith, written for Baptist History and Identity Class HC 3121, John Leland Center for Theological Studies, April 2012.

Interviews:

Ellen Albert – Member, CHBC Building and Grounds Committee

Linda Austin -- Deacon

Jennifer Cowett – Member, CHBC Worship Team

Carolyn Kramer -- Deacon

Rev. Ruth Muhlbauer – CHBC Associate Pastor

Andrew Odell -- Deacon

Rev. Anne M. Smith -- Chaplain, Reagan National Airport

Jeanne Woodside – CHBC Librarian