

**Annual Report to the Front Range Region of the Diocese of Colorado
For the Lunch and Life Program, Calvary Church – Golden
August 2024**

Lunch and Life provides a home-cooked meal, community, and a word of hope each week of the semester to several hundred Mines students and staff. This ministry is an extension of Calvary's 157-year commitment to being a civic church - bringing in, building up, and sending out God's people in the community of Golden. As students and staff come for fellowship, food, and encouragement, we see God at work gathering many college ministries together.

Lunch and Life promotes the health and well-being of college students.

In addition to providing healthy hot meals, including vegetarian entrees, the welcoming ambiance of our weekly lunch provides a space for students to come together to talk about their shared experiences, build relationships and unwind from the highly competitive campus environment. The lunch is an off-campus oasis where students decompress for the sake of mental health and reduced burnout.

A recent outgrowth of this ministry is an *English as a Second Language* program (ESL) which provides conversational skills and social connection for those who are wanting to learn English in a fun, relational way. This ministry, initiated by one of our volunteers, formed because many spouses of Lunch and Life students from other countries wanted to converse, meet others, have fun, and have good emotional support.

Student interest in the *Lunch and Life* ministry saw unprecedented growth in 2023 in terms of program attendance. During 2023 we served approximately 9,500 students over 26 weekly lunches. The average weekly attendance increased **45%** from 296 to 430 students per week from the spring to fall semesters, respectively. In 2023, the combination of food cost inflation and increased attendance saw program expenditures increase 29 percent between the 2023 spring and fall semesters. Despite higher food expenses in 2023, we continued to maintain a modest cost of \$3.34 per student per week.

In 2023, program income of \$14,700 was sourced from outside grants obtained from the Front Range Region (\$5,000), The Oakes Trust (\$3,500) and individual gifts (\$6,200). The Calvary Vestry has been informed of the increase in program expenditures and the major increase in weekly attendance. They enthusiastically continue their strong support for the program including continued funding of amounts above budget. In 2023, Calvary Church provided approximately 47% of cash expenditures.

During the 2024 spring semester we hosted 4,200 students averaging 353 students per week over 12 lunches at a cost of \$3.75 per student.

For 2024, Lunch and Life is receiving funds from 3 grants outside of the parish totaling \$15,500 including funding from the Front Range Region (\$7,000); The Oakes Trust (\$5,000) and the Shepard-Holton Trust (\$3,500). We have received an additional \$5,255 from individual gifts to the ministry through July 31st.

Calvary Church acknowledges and greatly appreciates the strong support for this ministry from the Front Range Region over many years.

Ministry expenses and income are summarized in the tables below.

2023 Balance Sheet (EOY)

Calvary Cash Contributions to Ministry*	\$12,397
Ministry Income (Grants & Gifts)	\$19,331
Ministry Expenses	-\$31,728
Net	0

2024 Balance - Spring Semester to 7/31/24

Calvary Cash Contributions to Ministry*	\$2,800
Ministry Income (Grants & Gifts)	\$12,930
Ministry Expenses	-\$15,730
Net	0

*Amount excludes Calvary's contributions-in-kind for room setup and cleaning estimated to be \$10,000 per year.

Student Responses to Ministry

Based on personal comments made to our Volunteers, students personally express their gratitude for the program. Likewise, comments posted on our recent online survey were positive and highly appreciative of the program. Here are some examples of student feedback on the program.

A number of students have mentioned that Tuesday "Church" (church lunch) is their favorite day of the week! A student recently lamented that he was unable to attend Church next semester given his class schedule. An international student recounted that Church was his only hot meal during the week. The rest of time he mainly survived on peanut butter as protein, since he had trouble affording food and was too busy to cook.

The Welcoming Team has observed that few students use their cell phones during lunch, as they are usually engaged in lively conversation. One graduate student mentioned that she's including Lunch and Life in the Acknowledgments of her dissertation!

Recently an international student provided this testimonial. "The Tuesday lunch gathering stands out as an exceptional respite for us Mines students, offering a much-needed break from the academic and practice pressures. It provides a delightful opportunity to connect with friends at church while savoring a professionally prepared hot meal. As an international student, the friendships forged within the church community have been a source of joy, and the kindness and hospitality extended by the church staff have left a lasting impression. Beyond its social significance, this meal plays a vital role in addressing hunger at the university level, offering a delicious solution for students who may need assistance preparing their meals. Pastor Scott's insightful words on this day provide a moment for thoughtful reflection."

In 2023, we have noticed a marked increase in the number of Mine's students attending services, several of them have even joined the choir.

Lunch and Life began as a handful of students and volunteers over 20 years ago. Today a dedicated corps of about 20 volunteers faithfully shop, prep, serve meals and enjoy the fellowship that this ministry provides. Volunteers also serve as “Table Hosts” who engage with students over lunch. At our front door, our greeters set the stage for the warm and welcoming ambiance found in our Great Hall where lunch tables are decorated with seasonal themes.

With the strong support of our Vestry, the corps of faithful volunteers, our generous financial supporters and by God’s grace we look forward to another vibrant semester of Christian hospitality with our friends from Mines. I believe that vibrancy is illustrated in the candid photos shown on the attached poster.

Faithfully.

Craig Horlacher and Jim Kammer

Ministry Coordinators
Calvary Church-Golden

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