



## **Transformation, Treasures, and Time**

Elizabeth Harten

I first sat in a pew at Calvary close to thirty years ago. As a cradle Episcopalian, I've always felt at home with our liturgy and music, but at Calvary, I discovered the transformational power of being a part of a faith community and of being in relationship with a parish family. Calvary has become my spiritual home, where my faith is restored and nourished. When we all are gathered together as a Christian congregation sharing a common life in Christ, we can more fully serve one another and the world around us. Being surrounded by the compassion and encouragement of our Christian community lightens our loads, strengthens us, and gives us courage and hope.

Especially during the years when I was teaching, it was incredibly important for me to be in church on Sunday in order to get through the week. If I skipped a Sunday, I felt it—something was missing! My patience was expended so much more quickly, and I lacked the focus, the energy, and the resilience to do my job effectively and to serve the Lord as He intended. And I quickly learned that the more I gave back to my parish family in time and treasure, the more I gained and prospered.

More and more my life has become centered around Calvary. And life just keeps getting better and better. Now that I have more time to spend doing Calvary things, I never have been happier, but I also now can even more fully appreciate the power of being connected to our faith community. As a Lay Eucharistic Visitor (LEV), I am privileged to take Holy Communion to the members of our parish who are unable to attend services. It is a blessing that makes my heart overflow. As an extension of our congregation, my LEV partner, Ellie Yuhasz, and I are the connection to Calvary for the people we visit—people, who at one time may have been just as involved and invested in their Calvary lives as I have become. Yet now that their circumstances have changed and as they draw nearer to the end of their earthly journeys, they no longer can be physically among the congregation for worship every Sunday. Something is missing! And as their time may be filled with end-of-life doubts and fears, more than ever they need that support that we give to one another every week. To be able to share the grace bestowed on us during worship services with those who desire that feeling of being a part of our congregation again is pure joy for me.

The fellowship we enjoy at Calvary is a foretaste of God's heavenly kingdom. While the hustle and bustle and stresses of daily life lurk at the wooden doors, God's grace fills our sanctuary. As we gather together to worship each week, we are blessed with the transformational power to become whole in our commitment to God and to do His work.