

Turning toward God's Abundance

Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. Joel 2:13

We sign this verse from Joel as our Gospel Acclamation during the season of Lent. With it, we welcome the stories of Jesus that call us to reflect and focus on repentance and God's amazing grace. Turning to God and asking for God's goodness and mercy to forgive our sins and show us how to live anew in the abundant life of God is the gift of Lent. We also turn toward Easter and the abundant life that is proclaimed through Holy Week and the Three Days – Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Vigil of Easter. God in Christ Jesus passing over from death to life. This good news is the center of our faith and the hope in which we journey. Through the 40 days of Lent, join us in turning toward God's abundance in devotion. With the community of faith at Cross of Hope Lutheran Church, encounter scripture, contemplate in reflection, and pray together as we turn toward God's abundance.

[Please sign up now to offer a devotion to share with the community.](#)

Offer your prayerful written reflection, art, poetry, song or other medium of devotion by **February 13th** to Nancy Morrison at media@crossofhope.org

Hold the weekend of May 14-15 to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Cross Of Hope Lutheran Church. We are finishing forming leadership teams to plan and host a weekend filled with events and opportunities to mark this time in the life of our community. More information in the months to come as we look forward to giving thanks for all God has done and continues to do through the ministries of COH!

If you'd like to explore serving on a team for this special weekend, please contact Pr. Adam.



Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School

6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW
 Albuquerque, NM 87120
 Phone Number: (505) 897-0047
 E-mail: office@crossofhope.org
 On the web at: www.crossofhope.org
cohcouncil@crossofhope.org

This Journal of Cross of Hope Lutheran Church is published each month for the enrichment of the mission (“Loving God • Transforming Relationships • Serving Others”), for the life of the people of God at Cross of Hope and our community.

- Pastor: Rev. R. Adam Berndt
- Production Editor: Linda Willoughby
- Editorial Staff: Beth Cretsinger
Forrest Uppendahl
- Columnists: Pastor Russ Sorensen
Gretchen Comfort
- Contributors: The Church Mouse
- Reporter and Writer: Mary Bresnahan
- Photographers: Antonio Alba
Florence Begay
Laura Berndt
Nancy Morrison
Margie Reed
- Council Communication:
Pat Benchik,-President
Margie Reed,-Vice President and Executive

WE WANT YOUR NEWS ITEMS

Deadline is 10th of the month for the following month's edition. Send E-mail articles to office@crossofhope.org or deliver to church office.

Stewardship

Stewardship involves your time, talent and treasure. Contact the church office for assistance in getting started in any of our ministries. Please remember Cross of Hope in preparing your will.

Cross of Hope School News



Debra Alba, School Ministry Director

I'm delighted to announce that we have hired a second 1st grade teacher, Debra Gonzales. Ms. Debra is a licensed Level 3 Instructional Leader, K-8. She is a retired APS educator who has a passion for teaching and learning. She has had a variety of teaching experiences and we are thrilled she is joining us!



A note from 1st Grade Teacher, Debra Gonzales - Hello my name is Debra Gonzales the new first grade teacher here at Cross of Hope School. I am so excited to be part of the Cross of Hope School community.

A little about my background, as an educator, I retired after 23 years of teaching in grades K-3. I also held various instructional positions while working for APS. Most of my experience was working for APS but my last teaching position was with Alice King Community School. I attended UNM and graduated with both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Education K-8 from there.

I volunteer with a couple of organizations doing different things. One is with Dual Language Education New Mexico and work with their planning committee for their annual conference, La Cosecha. The other is with the National Institute of Flamenco and I work during the summer with their Flamenco Kids Camp where I teach literacy or help with the organization.

On a personal note, my husband and I have two grown children, three grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. We have two four legged faithful friends and companions living with us, Scooby and Nacho (a Chihuahua and a Chiweenie). We enjoy gardening, cooking together, and listening to music. We also enjoy live music and theater performances.

School news continued from page 2

News from School Director, Debra Alba

- The month of January our Fruit of the Spirit was PEACE. In our Elementary chapel we've talked about synonyms for Peace and learned about the Hebrew word for peace, "SHALOM". It is understood as a sense of completeness and wholeness, where nothing is missing and nothing is broken. This is not just for the individual, but for the entire community. If you have a preschooler at home, be sure to ask them to sign Peace for you in American Sign Language.

Open Houses

For prospective families interested in learning more about our school

Wednesday, February 9
 4:00-6:00 p.m. To RSVP or request further information please contact our School Support Specialist, Erika Miller at isspecialist@crossofhope.org

WINTER COAT DRIVE - During the month of January we collected 57 new or slightly used (clean) Winter Coats to donate to Locker #505. We had a spot in our Great Hall and collected them throughout the month.

SPIRIT DAYS – In January we had Spirit Days on **Friday, January 14 (Cowgirl/Cowboy Day)** and **Friday, January 28 (Favorite Color Day - from head to toe!)**

School Online Registration Opens to the Public, February 21

Go to <https://www.crossofhope.org/elementary-school-admissions/> for more information.

Tuition for the 2022-2023 School Year

Elementary Tuition

Kindergarten - 5th grade: \$7,075

Preschool Tuition

T/TH: \$2,290

M/W/F: \$3,430

M-F \$5,720

Communications Director

The Communications Director ensures effective communication across various platforms such as website, social media, email, newsletter, bulletin, PowerPoint, and others as appropriate for Cross of Hope Church and School.

Scope: Part-Time

Duties include: Maintaining and updating all of the following:

Digital Communications: website, social media accounts, weekly community email

Worship Communications - Sunday PowerPoint, Sunday bulletin (Hope-filled Happenings), Sunday leaders guides, special worship services as needed.

Other Print Communications - monthly newsletter (Rays of Hope Journal), and others as needed.

For a complete job description, email office@crossofhope.org. Please send your resume and references to office@crossofhope.org or mail to Cross of Hope Lutheran Church, 6104 Taylor Ranch Rd NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120.



FRIENDS + FAITH + EVERYDAY LIFE

COH Small Group Ministry

The Mission of Cross of Hope Faith Connections Groups...

To provide an opportunity for all people

To share Christ's love and authentic community

In a small group setting where lives are transformed through growth in faith and service to others.

New Worship & Small Group Series

In Everyday People

February 6, 2022 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

In Blessings (and Curses!)

February 13, 2022 – Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Through Mercy

February 20, 2022 – Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

In Jesus

February 27, 2022 – Transfiguration of Our Lord

Thank You

The family of Helen Leon would like to thank the members of Cross of Hope, and Pastor Adam, for supporting us through our mother's Demential diagnosis and her final days. From sitting with Mom so we could rest, to bringing food, having food delivered, gift cards for food, texts and phone calls, we were sustained in the most comforting and loving way. The last three weeks were the most difficult, but through your prayers, we were given strength that could only have come from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



Cross of Hope member, Helen Leon died December 2, 2021 and her obituary can be viewed at: [Obituary for Helen Placzkiewicz Leon at Direct Funeral and Cremation Services](#)

Toni Leon Kovarik and David Kovarik, Nancy Leon, Lauren Kovarik and Ewan Jones.



Heart Strings

Members of COH unable to worship with us on a regular basis.

- Erin Sachs 1-Feb
- Jane Fuller 5-Feb
- John Valdez 6-Feb
- Nancy Leon 7-Feb
- Bre Roberts 7-Feb
- Megan Jahn 8-Feb
- Mike Sakelaris 8-Feb
- Greta Williams 11-Feb
- Becky Stewart 12-Feb
- Karen Wilson 15-Feb
- Chris Frazer 16-Feb
- Carroll Werling 16-Feb
- Lisa Jones 17-Feb
- Glenna Meneely 18-Feb
- Robert Phillips 21-Feb
- Mitchell Frazer 24-Feb
- Leaf Strand 24-Feb
- Corbin Bencomo 24-Feb
- Leon Carrico 24-Feb
- Sierra Pascarella 24-Feb
- David Albin 25-Feb
- Lydia Alba 25-Feb
- Morgan Case 27-Feb
- Denise Kouri 28-Feb

Carroll Werling
2331 Westside Blvd SE #202
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

Karen Reiten
899-1504
4841 Shin Avenue NE
Rio Rancho, NM 87144

John Fries
Gardens - Retreat Villas
Assisted Living
4100 Jackie Road SE, #15
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

Carol Sabrowsky
1250 Northland Dr Apt 110
Princeton, MN 55371

Carol Russell
404-0566
crgardener@aol.com
121 Second Street
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

Russ and Mary Pat Edwards
Brookdale, 300 Valencia Dr
SE, Apt 345
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87108

Bobbi Dopslaf
10400 Universe Blvd. NW Apt
815
Albuquerque, NM 87114

NewAddress for BJ Owens
B.J. Owens
1355 Meadowlark Lane SE, #101
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

New Email and Address for the Orbinati family
Connie Orbinati -
ccelorb@gmail.com
Kel and Connie Orbinati
1105 Wigwam,
Leander, TX 78641



- David and Lynne Bagby 14-Feb 13 years
- Bob and Margie Reed 19-Feb 56 years
- Kevin and Deney Perkins 21-Feb 13 years
- Bruce and Linda Molde 26-Feb 56 years

Council Corner

By Janet Conlon, COH Council Member



May the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

The Church Council held our first meeting of the year on January 18, 2022.

We are very pleased to announce that Debra Gonzales began her position as our second first grade teacher on January 3, 2022.

Cross of Hope is currently in the process of hiring a new Communications Director. As most of you already know, our current Communications Specialist, Nancy Morrison, will be retiring in the near future. We have been blessed by her professionalism, graciousness and overall joyful personality for many years.

We accepted, with regret, the resignation of Denise Kouri, Council Member, effective January 18, 2022. She and her husband Jim have purchased a home out of state and will be moving in the next several weeks.

Discussion began regarding our Annual Calendar of Leadership Activities and is to be continued at the next Council meeting.

Cross of Hope Lutheran Church will be celebrating its' "40th Anniversary" on May 16, 2022. This milestone in the history of our Church deserves recognition. We are currently working together with Pastor Adam on the best ways to commemorate this significant anniversary in the life of our community.

Cross of Hope Elementary School will have a 4% increase in tuition for the 2022/2023 school year as recommended by the School Ministry Team.

ECECD Grant Project - The funds provided from this preschool grant to be used in accordance with guidelines

December cleanup day was successful. Scouts joined our property team and cleaned up behind the preschool and sheds. They discarded old wood, a refrigerator, broken boxes, risers, leaves, old paint, etc. They also put down walk-on bark on the east side of the preschool. All this was done in a couple of hours.

We, the Church Council, are looking forward to a wonderful year and will keep you apprised of upcoming events and activities. Blessings for all!

Pastor Adam and Nancy Lacher coordinating school child pickup.

Photo by Florence Begay



Christmas – Behind the Scenes

As interviewed by: Mary Bresnahan
 Photos contributed by Antonio Alba



As you may be aware Thomas Ropp, Director of Music Ministries, took Richard Hielkema’s place when he moved on to new adventures. Thomas is a sophomore at UNM, majoring in music. He has been in his position at Cross of Hope since the end of October. He has taken on quite a responsibility.

I wanted to speak to Thomas and hear what it was like for him to put together our musical performances for Christmas. I could only imagine it would be a challenge, considering his newness besides having final exams, working on a film set and playing for college graduation. The following is what Thomas shared with me – and now you too.

Everything started with planning about a month before Christmas. There was choosing songs (some folks requesting special pieces) and finding people to perform them. Thomas wanted to give special attention to the Voices of Hope as they have been on break due to the pandemic. His family (Mike, Susan and Kate) was easy since he’d throw out ideas and they were agreeable (usually a brass piece).

Thomas had not experienced pre-service music before. He invited those who expressed interest in performing. After planning, he needed to formalize what would be performed, by whom and when. The fun began when it was time for rehearsals. Decisions had to be made about what pieces would be performed with what instruments. Some of the final rehearsals were very long. Everyone worked very hard to bring the music together. The Praise + Team worked with Thomas to find different renditions and styles of popular Christmas carols.

There were lessons learned – a big one was balancing everything. He learned that such a big project should start earlier. (He couldn’t start much earlier considering he only started the job two months ago!) Thomas is starting to think about Easter already.

Thomas said he really enjoyed the pre-service music. He liked to see others share their musical gifts. His family was very supportive. I’m sure that helped a lot. He is appreciative of how supportive everyone has been.



Christmas Behind the Scenes continued from page 7



I asked Thomas about conducting. I'm sure there is a course for this. "Yes", Thomas said, there is a class. It is offered in the Junior year of college. The rest is practice and experience. Fortunately, Thomas knows the instructor for this class. He got the last open slot. Class begins in January. Thomas knows he has to do some exercising since his shoulders were sore from his Christmas conducting.

Thomas has done some arranging and composing. When he has composed the piece, he knows the music much better. Conducting requires knowing the music very well. Playing it in your head and practicing it several times before "show time" is important.

I learned something about putting together performance, conducting and Thomas. Hope you have too! Thomas is an amazing young man. I think we are lucky to have him while he is learning and growing in his profession. If he could do this in two months just think what Easter will be like! Give him a nod or a conversation when you see him at church.

Thanks Thomas for your hard work and effort.

Annual Legislative Issue Briefing February 28.

The Issue Briefing will now take place as an online event.

We are very disappointed to share, **the annual LAM-NM Issue Briefing and Bishop's Luncheon will not be held in person again this year.** Due to the critically high numbers and incredible ease of spread of Omicron, the latest coronavirus variant, we simply cannot justify holding in-person events as previously planned for February 8.

As an alternative, the Issue Briefing will be held on the Zoom platform, **still on Tuesday, February 8, but now beginning at 9:30 and ending at noon.** The event follows the in-person event in format with guest speakers, Bishop Jim Gonia sharing his thoughts on advocacy in the public arena, and an update on the legislation of importance to Lutheran Advocacy Ministry - New Mexico.

Please register for the online Issue Briefing [HERE!](#)

We look forward to seeing all of you virtually and look forward with great anticipation to when we can safely gather together again in person. Email Kurt Rager at krager@rmselca.org should you have any questions.

Kurt A. Rager, Director, Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-NM Rocky Mountain Synod-ELCA
 1100 Indian School Road NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102 505.242.2493 (o), 505.269.6470 (c)



The logo features a stylized yellow star on the left. To its right, the word "Family" is written in blue, "Promise" in purple, and "of Albuquerque" in a smaller purple font below. The year "2022" is written in bold black text to the right of "of Albuquerque".

COH HOSTINGS: March 13-20 and August 14-21

Currently, there are 3 families with 7 children: ages 4-15. There is one anticipated family graduation soon. They shelter with our gracious friends in Christ at the Church of the Good Shepherd (COGS). This support of providing shelter has been going on for almost three years! We formerly hosted, in our building, 2 weeks concurrently and now we host one week at a time, months apart, in their building.

The Family Promise (FP) board has prioritized forward movement with renovations of the San Pedro site that will lead to Certificate of Occupancy ASAP. However, there have been supply and other delays for many reasons related to COVID. There are two men from COGS who are available to answer renovation questions and bring detailed needs to light in all terms related, including financial needs. Please, contact Lois 505-306-7694 or Jan 505-362 3663.

We thank you for your gracious and generous support of the Families who would otherwise be homeless. Instead, are they supported through a very difficult time. They submit to background checks, and random drug screening. They are provided with counseling, financial management and computer skill training. They are assisted with finding jobs, community services in general, and housing opportunities with many community program supports. All of these things give them a chance for a new beginning, which leads them to independence! The FP program success rate in 2020 was 94%!

HOW YOU CAN HELP: WRITE our dates of Hosting on your calendars and PRAY for the families. WATCH for the detailed list of food, meals, and items that we will need to provide in March and August in the weekly bulletin (Hope Filled Happenings). PRAY about your possibilities to provide financial support for the renovations. (Due to COVID there will be no in person hosting.)

Lois and Jan are so very grateful for your generous gifts of time, money, food, household items, furniture, and of course your prayers. A special thanks to all who helped FILL the HOME of a graduating family during Advent, to BSA Troop 126 family for delivery, and to the Banner Babes who recently financially donated, most generously, to our COH FP ministry! We will use it to support our families' needs. **Together**, WE MAKE a DIFFERENCE in the lives of all of the children served because their families survived stress together.

You are such a BLESSING to the Family Promise Ministry here and in all of Albuquerque! Thank you, Lois Caipen, 505-306-7694, and Jan Anderson, 505-362 3663.



Nurse's Notes

Gretchen Comfort, RN

New Year, New Look at Emotions

When we were younger we probably thought of ourselves as someone who could function pretty well in this world. Some of us may have been over achievers.

We like being good at our jobs, possibly trying new things and knowing how to do things for ourselves, without asking for help. But if grief, for any reason enters our life it can turn everything upside down. Being able to “grieve well” is something that avoids and confuses most of us.

It is necessary to try and avoid some of the myths such as

1. You can't change what you feel
2. Try to eliminate or avoid bad emotions
3. There are good and bad emotions.

Emotions are our brain's natural reaction to external stimulus. Some are easy and pleasant and others are difficult and tough. They are what they are and controlling them can be learned. We should not try to run away from them.

If you try to figure out why you are angry, guilty or feel numb about your daily activities, try to correct the situation. There are solutions or alternatives to most things, so making changes or having plans to resolve situations can lead to a feeling of accomplishment.

There are bad ways to deal with tough emotions. Usually the first thing is to keep busy, some use alcohol and others avoid people. When we try to avoid thoughts, it can actually hurt our overall mental health and well-being.

Now, it is important to have only positive/good emotions. All emotions can be explained and dealt with in acceptable ways. For example: losing a job can lead to new job interviews. Often, people are elated after a positive interview while sadly, they may never hear from that employer again. Try to be logical and know that this can often happen.

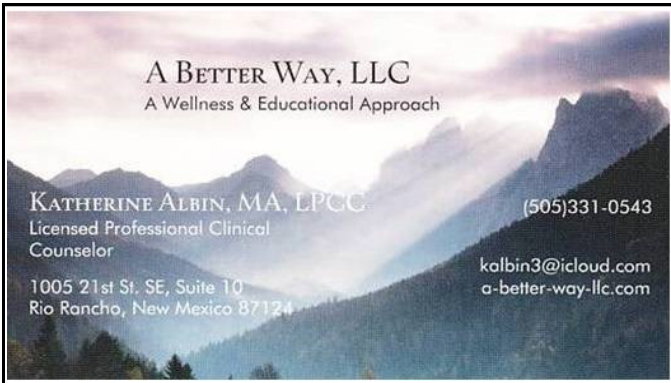
It is possible to try too hard to suppress negative feelings. This can lead to bad dreams, negative thoughts and/or over-eating.

Emotions are natural reactions and happen as responses to our lives.

Anger can lead us to try being respectful and rethink things before responding quickly. Isolation can lead to lack of motivation. Acknowledge sadness and it will be hard, but try to be with a friend so that this becomes easier as time passes.

As you recognize emotions for what they are, try to change them and “lean into the pain” and feel all of your feelings. As you feel more positive about yourself you will see others respond in a positive fashion.

When you need these services, please think of Rays of Hope sponsors.
 We thank them for their continued support in offsetting the costs (by \$10 per month) associated with producing Rays of Hope each month.



A BETTER WAY, LLC
 A Wellness & Educational Approach

KATHERINE ALBIN, MA, LPCC (505)331-0543
 Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor
 kalbin3@icloud.com
 a-better-way-llc.com

1005 21st St, SE, Suite 10
 Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87124



THRIVENT FINANCIAL®

David W. Hommel, ChFC®, FIC, CLTC®
Financial Consultant
 david.hommel@thrivent.com

7600 Jefferson St NE Ste 25
 Albuquerque, NM 87109
 505-271-0065 / Cell: 505-269-1381
 Fax: 505-856-3683

Connecting faith & finances for good.®



thrivent®

Stacey E Marz
 FIC, CLTC®
Financial Consultant
 Valley Consulting Group
 stacey.marz@thrivent.com
 connect.thrivent.com/stacey-marz

☎ 480-237-3669 2222 S Dobson Rd, Ste. 700 Mesa, AZ 85202
 ☎ 505-271-0065 7600 Jefferson St NE, Ste 25 Albuquerque, NM 87109



thrivent®

Matthew J Klandrud
 ChFC®, RICP®, CKA®
Financial Consultant
 Valley Consulting Group
 matthew.klandrud@thrivent.com
 connect.thrivent.com/matthew-klandrud

☎ 480-237-3669 2222 S Dobson Road Ste 700 Mesa, AZ 85202
 ☎ 505-271-0065 7600 Jefferson St NE, Ste 25 Albuquerque, NM 87109

Cross of Hope School (Preschool-5th)
Debra Alba
 Director of School Ministry

6104 Taylor Ranch Road, NW
 (505) 897-1832

email: esdirector@crossofhope.org
 website: www.crossofhope.org



There are openings for the 2021-22 school year (Preschool - 5th).
[Link to School \(PreK-5th\) Registration](#)

Help bring joy this season
 Buy your gifts at AmazonSmile and Amazon donates



Shop for gifts at
smile.amazon.com/ch/85-0294144 to generate donations for Cross of Hope and check out our **AmazonSmile Charity Lists** to donate items we need most.

Cross of Hope Church and School Congregational Council Team
cohcouncil@crossofhope.org

Pastor Adam Berndt, Pat Benchik - President,
 Margie Reed - Vice President,
 Sam Jones - Secretary, Janet Conlon, Tim Fuller,
 Kathy Gorman, Denise Kouri, Kristi Valdez

Rays of Hope Production Editor

This volunteer position consists of coordinating our monthly planning meetings with the ROH Planning Team and assembling the layout along with last minute additions. The position is 6-8 hours per month. For more information, email office@crossofhope.org or call (505) 897-0047, x102, Linda Willoughby will gladly talk with you more about what the job entails.

CROSS OF HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL

6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Mission Statement

Cross of Hope is a Spirit-centered community that shares Christ's love through worship, education and outreach to develop and strengthen relationships with God.

 Rev. R. Adam Berndt, Pastor

505-897-0047 • office@crossofhope.org
www.crossofhope.org

Facebook Page: Cross of Hope Church

Worship Times:

On-Site Sunday - 9:00 a.m.
Sunday - 10:45 a.m.
Digital: Sunday: 9:00 a.m.

Devotions: Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.

February Book Suggestions

By Dee Gutierrez

God's Plan for Spiritual Battle: Victory over sin, the world, and the devil. - Russell M. Stendhal

When unjustly attacked, seek the guidance and leadership of the Holy Spirit and retaliate by Overcoming Evil with Good. There is a huge difference between a Peacemaker and a Pacifist!

God's & Kings: A Novel - Lynn Austin

Gods and Kings is the story of King Hezekiah, heir to the throne of King David. When his evil father plots to sacrifice him, Hezekiah's mother, Abijah, searches frantically for a way to save him. But only two men can help her, and neither of them seems trustworthy. In a time and place engulfed by violence, treachery, and infidelity to Yahweh, Abijah and her son must discover the one true Source of strength if they are to save themselves and their country. Book 1 of Chronicles of the Kings.

So the Woman Went Her Way : A personal journey. Lynne Bundesen

Married young and unknowingly to an underworld figure, Lynne Bundesen fled with the children and began a journey that would take her to war-torn Cambodia, China, Israel, and Europe, as well as deep within her own heart and soul. It also chronicles her search for meaning and wholeness and her unexpected discovery of the inspiration and power she found through the women of the Bible.