

Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.' John 8.12



God be with you this Christmas and bless you in this new year. Enjoy some pictures that tell the story of our time together this Christmas as we continue to pray for peace. I look forward to sharing God's unfolding love for you in new and wonderful ways as we share this journey of life and faith through Cross of Hope.

Peace, Pr. Adam



Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School

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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.

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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, lbagby@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



Preschool Christmas Program

Please click on the link below to learn more about our school. Enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year will open at the beginning of March 2024

[School Information](#)

*Read about teaching position on page 3.

**COH Communications Director
 Job Posting**

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.

[Click on this link for more information.](#)

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Cross of Hope School News

Elementary School Teaching Position

Cross of Hope School is hiring an Elementary School Teacher!

Share your passion for teaching with children who love to learn! Join our creative team of educators at our small, Christian school. Our teacher student ratio is 1:15. Immediate position available.

Background check and New Mexico State teaching license are required.

Please send your resume and letter of interest to our Director of School Ministry, Susan F. Rivera, esdirector@crossofhope.org.

[Teacher Job Description - Link](#)



RIO GRANDE FOOD PROJECT
Food Pantry • Urban Garden • Community Hub

To our kind and dedicated community,

2023 brought much change to the Rio Grande Food Project. Pandemic-era SNAP benefits ended, and more and more people turned to pantries for help. Food supply challenges wreaked havoc on food shelves, and kind-hearted community partners ramped up food drives. Our 3x weekly food distributions returned indoors, and we are humbled by the many, many volunteers who braved biting cold, dusty winds, and blazing heat to carry out three years of drive-thru food distributions! Our water and electricity bill assistance team helped more households than ever before. We welcomed our first-ever bilingual English/Spanish Community Resources Director, strengthening our “beyond food” work and our ability to address root causes and negative effects of hunger. We doubled the size of our urban fruit and vegetable garden with plans to grow more food than ever before. We moved under contract to purchase land, taking our biggest step yet toward our vision of building a client-choice, grocery store-style food pantry and community hub. And finally, our new Co-Executive Director model has broadened our capacity to create a more dignified, accessible, and impactful food security hub here on Albuquerque’s west side. Rio Grande Food Project began as a community effort and will continue to grow as one.

Special thanks to: APS Schools, Jim & Jan Berry, Cargill Solutions, Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School, First Presbyterian Church, Mirehaven Gives Back, New Mexico Department of Health, Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Shepherd of the Valley Presbyterian Church, Trader Joe’s, and XPO.

Ari Herring and Kayla Strickler

Council Corner

by Margie Reed COH Council President



Happy New Year (2024) from the Property and Garden Teams! We are looking forward to the New Year and new challenges.

December brought the winter solstice, which means each day brings a little more daylight. Not only are we moving slower through these winter months, but the trees are also still leafless, the grass is still brown, and bulbs and plants remain underground. I'm looking forward to seeing a bud on a tree, or an early flower popping up through the ground. Not quite yet!

I want to take this opportunity to mention things that our all-volunteer Property and Garden Teams do for Cross of Hope. Pat Benchik is COH's Property Manager. Pat works with many vendors to request their services for repairs or projects that need to be done. Some of the projects recently completed include building a much-needed new gate behind the preschool, replacing ceiling tiles in the Great Hall and Pastor's office, and installation of wire next to the back of the preschool building to keep animals from burrowing underneath and the turf company is scheduled to fix a corner of the preschool turf where animals dug underneath. Pat makes sure all roofing, HVAC, water, or electrical problems are scheduled with the appropriate vendor and are resolved as soon as possible. Pat makes most of his calls while he is in Chicago visiting and checking up on his 99 ½ year old mother. I call him a visiting angel.

Sherrie and Rudy Simek, with help from Rich Mohr-Kelly our new garden helper, bagged a whopping 138 bags of leaves. Rudy blows the leaves into piles and then Sherrie picks up the leaves with a mulcher (kind of like a mower) so can you just imagine how many more bags there would have been. I predict a contest next year to guess how many bags will be needed. In addition to the amazing work they do all around our property to keep it in pristine condition, this powerful duo continues to set up and take down tables and chairs for events whenever and wherever they are needed. They perform scheduled fire drills, lock-down drills in the school and church and check all fire extinguishers and carbon monoxide detectors to ensure they are working properly. Both of them are part of the safety team and counting team. Rudy is a temple guard, usher, and property maintenance helper. He monitors the sprinkler systems and replaces parts when needed and does whatever else needs to be done. Sherrie is vice president of the Church Council, secretary of the banner babes, altar guild, assisting minister, WOW (Women on Wednesdays), Small Group member, and like Rudy, helps with whatever is needed.

John Lacher keeps our Kachina St. side flowers and shrubs trimmed, and weeds pulled. Whenever a copier needs to be fixed or refurbished John is at COH. He replaces all light bulbs when needed, installed new emergency lights throughout the school, Great Hall, and Preschool. John is a temple guard, assists in the sound room, monitors the sprinkler system, fixes anything that needs fixing, and helps wherever he is needed.

Rich Mohr-Kelly mows the grass, trims shrubs, helps with leaf cleanup and anything else that is needed. We need more helpers like Rich.

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I am honored to serve as President of the Church Council and am responsible for putting together the Council Agenda and sending it with attachments to the Council members for their review prior to the monthly meeting. I currently serve as the Property Assistant to Pat Benchik, by helping to follow-up with vendors on projects scheduled to be done, fix whatever small things need repair or replaced around the Church and school, and organize and clean where needed. I have taken over the responsibility for the gardens. In addition I serve on the safety committee, the school ministry team, the counting team, am an assisting minister and WOW member. I input weekly contributions into the Shepherds Staff, work in the office, and help with whatever else needs to be done.

The people listed above are all volunteers!

If you would like to become part of the Property or Garden team, please contact Pat Benchik at pbenchik@aol.com, or Margie Reed at margiereed@msn.com.

Happy New Year to you all from all of us: Pat Benchik, Sherry and Rudy Simek, John Lacher, Rich Mohr-Kelly, and myself. May the year 2024 bring peace, happiness, love, patience, and good health to all.



The Mission of Cross of Hope Faith Connections Group

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.

COH Small Group Ministry

A Season of Light

Cross of Hope Worship and Small Group Series

Epiphany: Let the Light . . .

- 1/7/24 Shine Mark 1:4-11 Baptism of Jesus
- 1/14/24 Guide John 1:43-51
- 1/21/24 Inspire Mark 1:14-20
- 1/28/24 Heal Mark 1:21-28
- 2/4/24 Lead Mark 1:29-39
- 2/11/24 Reveal Mark 9:2-9 Transfiguration



These themes are all connected to the Gospel and Jesus - the light of the world - whom we long for and whose light lives through our lives of faith.

Open group meetings: Sunday's 9:45am and Wednesday's 6:30pm

Talk with Pastor Russ Sorensen about other available time options at r2csorensen@gmail.com or (505) 400-8206

Las Posadas Celebration



Photos courtesy of 3MorrPhotos



Heart Strings

Members of COH unable to worship with us on a regular basis. Please contact and let them know we care.

Carly Adams	4
Susan Strand	7
Rosemary Neely	7
Susan Ropp	12
Nick Neely	13
Barbara J. Owens	14
Emily O’Roark	16
Tarra Toledo	17
Lori Braunhardt	18
Curtis Case	18
Emily Walter	18
Debbie Bokan	19
Cheri Sorensen	21
Silas Toledo	21
Victoria Jahn	24
Don Cretsinger	26
Joseph Poyner	27
Kiersten Hielkema	29

Dale and Edee Bauer
4905 Wagon Mound Trail NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120

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

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

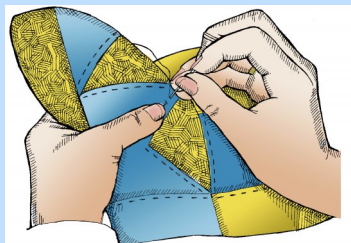
Carroll Werling
Palmilla Senior Living
10301 Golf Course Rd NW
Apt 144
Albuquerque , NM 87120



	<u>Day</u>	<u>Years Married</u>
Dale and Shirley McCan	1	29
John and Kristi Valdez	20	17
Jahn and Barbara Wright	27	55

Banner Babes celebrate this new year by making \$500.00 donations to the following:

- Cross of Hope School
- ELCA Good Gifts
- NM Ramp Project
- Rio Grande Food Project.



QUILTING GROUP

Behind the scenes at Las Posadas



Photo courtesy of 3MorrPhotos

Camp@COH and Youth@COH

Youth News –December

December was a big month for our youth with the Las Posadas event. Our youth worked hard this year taking on the roles of director, stage manager, wardrobes, sound, lighting, as well as the acting roles.

In addition, our youth helped our school kids participate this year. It warmed my heart to see the two groups interacting, sharing moments together. When you see one of our youth or one of our elementary age kids, let them know how much you appreciate their efforts and involvement in our church community.



Photos courtesy of 3MorrPhotos

Coming Up!

Camp resumes January 10 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm. We serve meals, have all camp activities, do Bible study, and end the evening with a campfire worship including s’mores. If you are interested in helping out or being a part of this fun ministry, contact me.

Sincerely,
Nancy Lacher

Volunteer Luncheon

Many of the volunteers at Cross of Hope celebrated the Christmas season with a get together at Sadie’s. The food was delicious, and the fun and laughter were delightful.



Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch will meet on Wednesday, January 10 at 1pm
Everyone is welcome!

Little Anita’s
12000 Corrales Rd.
Call Leon Carrico by January 8 so he can reserve seats.
505-506-7707 or 505-554-1128





The Happy Hope-r Ron Cordova



By Mary Bresnahan

Birthdate: November 8, 1950

Birthplace: Albuquerque, NM

Marriage: June 28, 1975 to Jane

Where: Albuquerque, NM

Children: Christopher (38), Kristyn (34)

Grandchildren: Khloe (5), Brantley (3)

Occupation: Retired Revenue Analyst at Presbyterian Healthcare for 34 years

Hobbies: Cooking, baking, yardwork, relaxing (he finds all his hobbies relaxing)

Ron’s parents were Evangeline and Henry “Hank.” They were native New Mexicans. Ron had 5 brothers: Henry, Gary, Ron’s twin brother Donald. They were all one year apart in age. Eight years later his brother Dennis (who was supposed to be Denise) arrived. “Ronald and Donald” were not identical twins. Don was better looking, taller and darker skinned. He described the children as “rowdy.” Evangeline was a homemaker. I can imagine she had her hands full with these “rowdy” boys. Hank was a Special Weapons Operator at Kirtland Air Force Base. All of Ron’s brothers live in New Mexico except Dennis who is in Seattle.

Hank was a Roman Catholic, but not practicing. Evangeline was a Protestant. This religious difference caused a few challenges back then when they wanted to get married. Both parents felt it was important to give the children a good faith foundation. The children were raised Catholic. Each of the older four boys attended three different Catholic schools, Ron and Don being together. When the latter two finished first grade their parents were called into school. They were told that they would promote the boys to second grade if Hank and Evangeline agreed to send the boys to a different school. After that the boys went to public school. You can only imagine how “rowdy” the twins must have been!

The children were allowed to choose their faith, so they all have a different church affiliation. Ron and Janie had the same focus for their children. Over the years Ron has found this good for him especially after Janie’s passing.

Ron attended Highland High School and Janie attended West Mesa High School. They both found themselves at Eastern New Mexico University in Portales, NM. They met on the first day of orientation. Ron’s father wanted him to attend UNM and live at home. Ron was firm that he needed to leave home. With that decision Ron had to pay his own way by working various jobs in the hospitality industry – bus boy, waiter, bar tender. He described his dad as “stern.” He received a B.B.A. in Business Management and Administration in 1973.

Janie wanted to get married, but her parents were paying for her tuition. It did not make economic sense to get married and lose that. She graduated in 1974 with a B.S. in Education and taught for 45 years in the Albuquerque schools before retiring. They married in 1975. Because Ron was a twin and

Ron continued from page 9

Janie had twins in her family, they figured the odds made them prime candidates for twins too. So, they waited ten years to have children. After Christopher and Kristyn arrived, they thought it best not to press their luck even though more children would have been welcome.

Ron and Janie always kept a “chores list.” After retiring they re-negotiated the “chores.” Janie was the “idea” person and Ron would get things done. That makes for a great team! Ron knew a lot about teambuilding since this was a role he played at Presbyterian, especially while he was a trainer.

Ron spent his 34 years at Presbyterian Healthcare starting in cost reporting then becoming Director of Registration and Admitting for all the hospitals in New Mexico. Next, he was in Compliance (Policy & Procedures), then the Business Office doing billing, training and collections and finally to computerized systems where he did training for software applications, including teambuilding. For the last 8 -10 years he was a Revenue Analyst. Ron says, “retiring was the best thing he ever did.”

Ron spends five days a week caring for his grandchildren. He gets them ready for school and takes Brantley to pre-K at Cross of Hope. He describes them as his “joy. They warm my heart.”

Besides being proud of his grandchildren, Ron is proud of his children, Christopher and Kristyn. Christopher had worked in construction until COVID put a hold on that. He is now a caretaker for special needs adults with his girlfriend, Amanda. Kristyn worked for Presbyterian in Admitting as a Registrar, and currently is in IT working with Medical Records.

Ron and Janie joined Cross of Hope when Pastor Bart first went around the neighborhood telling people about the arrival of a new church. That was about 38 years ago. Ron started ushering when Christopher had a service project. At the time there were three services. Ron organized the ushers and was the head usher. That was over 30 years ago. What will we do when he isn't at the door greeting us?

Pastor Adam arrived and allegedly kept changing things. Ron was unsure he could keep the changes straight. Now they have a saying, “Change is Good” which they share with each other every Sunday. It has become more of a friendly joke. Ron will admit that change helps one learn and grow.

When Janie passed, rather suddenly, the Cross of Hope family stepped up in supporting Ron through his transition. He wisely says, “Time is a gift. We need to make use of it.” He really likes that the church is working within our community. “We have our immediate family and our church family.” How true.

Ron is an interesting and funny person. I'm not sure how Ron can joke about Pastor Adam's energy when he is full of energy too. He always seems to be happy and enjoys what he does. At the beginning and closing of this interview Ron said, “I have had the most fun and blessed life.” I think we can all learn something from Ron - joy, thankfulness and engagement. If you have a moment, make your day by sharing a joke or a conversation (if he can squeeze you into his busy schedule).

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.

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Preschool (505) 899-0928

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

Pastor Adam Berndt, Margie Reed- President,
Sherrie Simek- Vice President, Janet Conlon-
Secretary, Bob Arseneau, Linda Ehlers, Tim
Fuller, Greg Morrison, Kristi Valdez, and Ron
Wirths

Because of you, life doesn't stop.



Cross of Hope
Lutheran Church

BLOOD
DRIVE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21
10:00AM-2:00PM

Church Lobby
6104 Taylor Ranch Rd NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120

Call 505-879-0608 to schedule an appointment!
Scan the QR code for online appointments!



For more information or to schedule a donation,
call 877-258-4825 or visit us at vitalant.org
Find us @

vitalant

Cross of Hope Care Outreach

Transportation
Medical Appointments
Other Appointments
Necessary Errands



Emergency Meals
Family Emergency
Illness
Death

Assistance is available:

- www.crossofhope.org/forms
- Email: care@crossofhope.org
- In the Great Hall
- Call COH office (505)897-0047x102



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.

January Book Suggestions

Recommended by Dee Gutierrez

Help, Thanks, Wow - Anne Lamott

It is these three prayers – asking for assistance from a higher power, appreciating what we have that is good, and feeling awe at the world around us – that can get us through the day and can show us the way forward.

The Shepherd's Wife, book 2 - Angela Hunt

Yeshua of Nazareth has two sisters: Damaris, married to a wealthy merchant's son, and Pheodora, married to a simple shepherd from Bethlehem.

The Grave Robber: How Jesus Can Make Your Impossible Possible- Mark Batterson

Do we believe that God still does miracles? Do we expect him to move in miraculous ways in our day-in, day-out lives? Maybe we'd like to see miracles, but it's hard to see past our problems. All that is about to change, like water into wine. Miracles are happening every day.