



Love • Transform • Serve

RAYS of HOPE JOURNAL

March 2025, Volume 43, Issue 3

Mission Statement

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

Journey to Hope

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10

NEW MEMBER

Information

During Lent in March, Pastor Adam will gather with anyone interested in becoming a member of Cross of Hope.

Together we will explore the mission and vision of Cross of Hope, our ministries, and the Lutheran tradition that is our guiding lens of faith. Details to follow as we respond faithfully to one another!

Join the New Members' group:

Contact RC Jordan at
media@crossofhope.org

Become a New Member guide:

Contact Pr Adam at
cohpastor@crossofhope.org



Save the Date

Join us in celebrating **10** years of service

Pastor Adam Berndt

*as a dedicated and faithful
servant to the community of
Cross of Hope Church and School.*

March 30, 2025

One service at 10 am

Celebration to follow

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:	Lynne Bagby
Editorial Staff:	Mary Bresnahan Beth Cretsinger RC Jordan Sheri Phillips Linda Willoughby
Columnist:	Pastor Russ Sorensen
Contributors:	The Church Mouse Monthly Book Suggestions
Reporter and Writer:	Mary Bresnahan
Photographers:	Jan Anderson Lynne Bagby Florence Begay RC Jordan Greg and Nancy Morrison
Council Communication:	Margie Reed-President Sherrie Simek-Vice President

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



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



School continued from page 2

Cross of Hope School News

CROSS OF HOPE SCHOOL

ADMISSIONS

2025/2026

Open Enrollment Begins
March 3





Preschool-5th Grade

5-Star Nationally
Accredited Preschool

Low Student/Teacher Ratios
Researched Based Curriculum
Safe and Secure Campus


505-897-1832
6104 Taylor Ranch Rd. NW

<https://www.crossofhopeschool.org> **Click here to register**



School continued on page 4

School continued from page 3



The Roving Hope-r

By Mary Bresnahan

March comes in the cusp of spring. This month I did something a little different. I gave the students a choice to talk about one of two topics – St. Patrick’s Day or the National Chocolate Chip Cookie Week (the first week of March). Here’s what they had to say.

Kindergarten



Harper

Harper chose to talk about Chocolate Chip Cookie Week. They are sweet. We get the dough from the store. I like them when they are warm.

First Grade



Diego

Diego wanted to talk about catching the leprechauns. “I’m going to get a bowl and put tape on it. It will be heavy tape so he (the leprechaun) can’t get out. I’ll take him out of the bowl. I’ll grab him and set him free in the tree in the house. He will leave at nighttime.”

Second Grade

Amaris

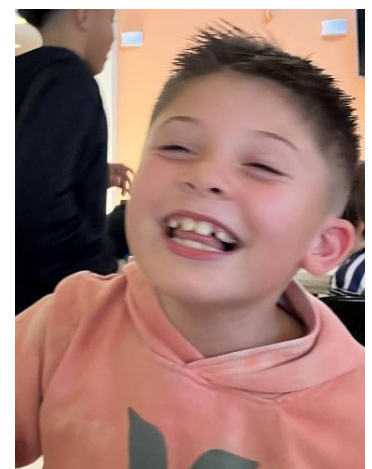


“I want to talk about Chocolate Chip Cookie Week. Chocolate chip cookies use flour, sugar, butter, chocolate chip and walnuts—and eggs. Then it gets mixed up and baked. I like them when they are nice and hot. I have them with my dad and my cousin. I eat them with milk.”

Third Grade

Joshua

Joshua’s birthday is March 31. That is the major thing for him. We talked about St. Patrick’s Day. “There are leprechauns. I almost trapped one. It’s a big deal to trap leprechauns. If you don’t wear green, you get a leprechaun pinch. My mom could maybe paint a picture.” His mom said she might make some green cookies. Joshua doesn’t like having his picture taken so it took a little extra effort to get him to smile (which he normally does all the time.)



Roving Hope-r continued from page 7

Fourth Grade Tino



Tino has a dapple dachshund. Tino said his dog is crazy (in a loving way).

Tino decided to talk about St. Patrick's Day. Most of what he shared was when he was in school in California. "We got green donuts. We would get bags of clovers, some candy (jellybeans). This is when I was in 1st grade. I'm going to wear green. We would watch a show. We would also get a green necklace with a clover, a top hat, and a green tie, and marshmallows. It's close to my dog's birthday. I'll put a green sweater on him. We could get a top hat (my grandma could make it). We might buy a cake. I don't know how to bake. My dad's the baker.



While on the subject of doing some baking in March, Ms. Leilani (a lunchroom mom) said she might make some macarons, which are made with almond flour and dyed different colors. She may make some green macarons that are sweetheart flavored for St. Patrick's Day. Leilani is an expert at these things since she owns her own baked goods business.



Our PreSchool and School are hosting

Yum!

**DADS &
DONUTS**

Yum!

For all school dads on March 25 and 26!

Council Article

By Sherrie Simek, Council Vice President

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6

I can't believe I'm writing this for the March issue of the Rays of Hope. January seemed to drag on, however February has flown by. Perhaps it was the ups and downs of the weather, perhaps its just because February only has 28 days. Nonetheless, many things remain the same. One of those is the dedication of our Church Council members serving faithfully, meeting monthly to discern the best needs of the school and church community.

Ron Cordova opened the January meeting with prayer and devotion. After which we discussed:

A. Personnel reviews: These are ongoing.

B. Sherrie Simek and Ron Cordova, members of the safety committee, laid the foundation for a discussion regarding external and internal security cameras. Some research will be done to gather bids so pricing and ease of maintenance can be presented to the Council in the future.

C. Due to the upgrade regarding WINDOWS 10, need to replace 7 computers as they will no longer be supported on October 2025. Replacement will occur over the next several months.

Margie Reed, closed our meeting in prayer.

You can find a Church Council member standing at the front door in between worship services on Sundays serving at Council Connections. Come connect with us. Come meet us if you haven't yet. We look forward to any questions or concerns. We are available to you!

Members of our Church Family enjoying Dessert Night



Family Promise Hosting at COH



Family Promise is coming to Cross of Hope for in-person dining **March 9-16, 2025.**

The mission of Family Promise of Albuquerque is to empower families in the Albuquerque and Rio Rancho communities at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness, to achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response. Their vision is to have sufficient support congregations, volunteers and paid staff that there will never be a waiting list for families that qualify for Family Promise of Albuquerque services.

We will be hosting at Cross of Hope Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 5pm - 7pm each of these evenings. This means we need your help! Here are several ways to help:

- Sign up to provide a meal for these evenings
- Sign up to host. We will need two hosts each evening
- Help with clean-up. (*Many hands make the work light.* Nehemiah 3)
- Provide groceries for the families that are currently in Family Promise.
- Deliver snacks to Cross of Hope on or before March 9
- Purchase household supplies
- Monetary donations and prayers are always needed

More information about this fantastic endeavor is available through our Cross of Hope Family Promise Coordinators: Jan Anderson jan1974abq@gmail.com and Glenna Meneely glennameneely@aol.com.

Camp @ COH

Come and join us on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm for games, food, Bible study, music, and fun! All are welcome.



Remember:
We will not have camp on March 5 (Ash Wednesday) or March 19 (Spring Break).



Happy Hope-r

Ron and Carol Wirths

By: Mary Bresnahan



Ron

Carol

Birthdate: June 13, 1944	December 20, 1951
Birthplace: Wichita, Kansas	Enid, Oklahoma
Married: December 28, 1974	Where: Wichita, Kansas
Children: Jeremy and Jared	Grandchildren: Matthew is 4 and Dorothy is 2
Occupation: Accountant	Accountant
Hobbies: Fishing, hiking, reading, meddling in kids' business	Reading, exercise classes

This is probably one of the easiest interviews I have ever done – Ron & Carol had nearly everything written up. It didn't leave many questions for me to ask. Ron would respond, "It's in there" and so it was! Here is what they wrote.

Ron and Carol came to Albuquerque by way of Wichita, Kansas. Ron was born there and Carol's family relocated to Wichita from Enid, Oklahoma when she was five years old. They first met in accounting class at Wichita State University, and both graduated with degrees in accounting in 1973. *(My first question was how did they do this when Ron is older than Carol. He did his military service stint following his dad's belief in work versus college.)* Ron graduated cum laude and Carol graduated summa cum laude. So, we know who is the smarter one.

Ron was the third of eleven children in a devout Catholic family. His father owned a construction company and a wood products company. *(His brothers joined the family business and branched out but Ron took a different route.)* He attended parochial schools from grade school through high school. After high school, with his number coming up during the Vietnam War, he elected to join the Air Force. His training was as a linguist, and he spent two years in Turkey as a Bulgarian/Russian linguist – the specifics being classified.

Wirths continued from page 8

Carol grew up with a younger sister and attended school in Haysville, Kansas. Her father worked as a sheet metal mechanic at Boeing and her mother was a cook for the public school system. Theirs was a devout Lutheran family. *(Her parents grew up during the depression. Her dad lived in a small Mennonite community. Her mom grew up on a farm.)*

Carol's first job after graduation was with Boeing in Wichita as an auditor. She convinced Ron, who had been working in the family construction business, to apply there also. They both became gainfully employed in the Finance Department at Boeing-Wichita.

They married on December 28, 1974 –you might note they celebrated their 50th anniversary in December 2024. Their first son, Jeremy, was born in 1977, with a second son, Jared, arriving in 1981. They decided it would be best for the boys if Carol took a sabbatical from work during their early childhood years. It was a great decision for all concerned. The money was tight, but the boys grew up much happier and well-adjusted. Ron was able to concentrate on his career without the worry of chasing daycare, appointments or school trips *(which we agreed is the complex role of today's parents.)* Carol enjoyed her roles as room mother, Sunday School teacher, and cub scout leader while the boys were young. She returned to work when the boys went to middle school.

In 1991, Ron had an opportunity to transfer to Macon, Georgia as business manager of a Boeing manufacturing facility. After much discussion and anxiety about leaving their close family connections, they made the move. It turned out to be one of the best things they had ever done. Life in the deep South was very different from the somewhat insular environment in Kansas. After surveying the educational opportunities in Macon, they discovered there were a couple of exclusive private schools and several underfunded, unimpressive public schools. The nearby city of Warner Robins, which was anchored by the Air Force Base of the same name, offered top notch public schools with lots of extracurricular programs. The commute to Macon was only twelve miles. The decision was made and they moved to Warner Robins, Georgia. They enrolled the boys in schools that were far more diverse than anything they had experienced in their short lives.

This early focus on education paid dividends in later years. Jeremy was a National Merit Scholar Finalist and went on to garner a BA in music, a BA in Vocal Performance, a Master's degree in Organ and Sacred Music, a Master's degree in Choral Conducting, a Doctor of Musical Arts, a Master's in Business Administration, and a Law degree. Jared earned Bachelor degrees in both Economics and Accounting. *(Ron and Carol couldn't be prouder parents.)*

Carol was employed as a financial aid counselor at Mercer University Medical School during their stay in Georgia. Then in early 1997, Ron was informed that Boeing wanted to shutter some of its smaller operations and Boeing-Georgia was on the chopping block. With only 1,200 employees it was a minor player in the aerospace manufacturing arena. Ron and Carol chose to return to Boeing in Wichita. Ron became business manager for the machining fabrication business unit, and Carol resumed her career at Boeing as a cost analyst for government contracts.

In 2002, with the airline industry in disarray after the 9/11 attacks, Ron took advantage of an early retirement offer *(at the ripe age of 58)*. Carol continued working until she reached age 55. In their early retirement years, they busied themselves with volunteer activities. Carol worked as a designated payee at Episcopal Social Services – an organization serving clients receiving Social Security Disability payments who had no trusted financial advisor or family to manage their affairs. Ron worked as a volunteer income tax preparer. He also was active in maintaining property at their church.

Wirths continued on page 10

Wirths continued from page 9

They had often talked about relocating to another state in their retirement years. Following the deaths of both of their mothers in the 1990s, they found themselves being primary caretakers for their widowed fathers, neither of whom would remotely consider moving. Both their fathers passed away within months of one another in 2013.

Now was the time to explore a more desirable place to live. At that time, Jeremy had recently moved to Albuquerque with his partner James. Jeremy practices family law in Albuquerque and Santa Fe, while also being Music Director at Saint Mark's Episcopal Church in Albuquerque. His partner, James, is a pediatric neurosurgeon on the faculty at UNM. Their son Jared is an accountant at Saint Monica's Catholic Church in Dallas – a congregation of 12,000 parishioners, 100 employees and a K thru 8th grade school with 750 students. Jared's wife Barbara is a bilingual kindergarten teacher in the public school system, and they live in Allen, Texas. At the time of deciding to move Ron and Carol's two grandchildren, Matthew (now almost 4) and Dorothy (now 2) had not arrived on the scene.

Ron and Carol wanted to be near family when they relocated. They preferred moving to New Mexico rather than the Dallas area which they felt would be hard to navigate, particularly as they became older. Originally, they planned to move to Santa Fe. They abandoned that idea after a failed real estate deal. They visited Del Webb Mirehaven, a fifty-five and over community in Albuquerque, and thought it would be a suitable opportunity. It has turned out to be a remarkably wise decision. With everyone in the same age and socio-economic group, it has been easy to adapt to a common active lifestyle. The Friday night happy hour sessions provide opportunities to share the varied experiences senior citizens have had raising families, traveling and pursuing careers. As Ron noted, having a rudimentary understanding of weather or geriatric ailments qualifies him as a sparkling conversationalist at the Amenity Center. Ron has two favorite hobbies, fishing and tormenting his sons with unsolicited advice. The first he does less than he wants, and the second he does more than he should. He is also part of a small group that hikes and then explores the 'best' green chile cheeseburger in the area. Ron also volunteers as part of a group that monitors the landscaping needs of the community common areas. Ron likes to point out that his group has reduced water consumption by 4.5 million gallons per year since taking over the process. (*You would think he was an engineer! A great accomplishment.*) Carol is in a neighborhood book club and stays engaged in exercise classes and social activities. Ron also serves on the Cross of Hope Council.

They attend the first service. Seek them out for a pleasant and fun chat. Be careful of Ron, you might find yourself seeking out a green chile cheeseburger or on a hiking trail.





Margie Reed	1
John Webb	2
Kevin Perkins	3
Claudia Russo	4
Lindsay O'Roark	6
Sylvia Oelsner	6
Laura Burton	13
Pat Benchik	15
Ethan McClain	17
Todd Bramley	21
Xander Bencomo	24
Joel A Wickert	26
Linda George	27
Jahn Wright	28
Jasmyn Soto	28



Heart Strings

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

Carroll Werling

Palmilla Senior Living
10301 Golf Course Rd NW
Apt 144
Albuquerque, NM 87114



Cross of Hope Member, Ross Sutter died peacefully on February 14, 2025.

More information about services is forthcoming.
Cards may be sent to:

Keri Sutter
7513 Frederick Ln. SW
Albuquerque, NM 87121

May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.



	Day	Years
Duane and Glenna Meneely	1	50
Ed and Beth Christians	3	24
Rich and Rosemary Neely	13	43
Richard and Erin Hielkema	25	25
Ken and Lynnette Anselmi	25	58

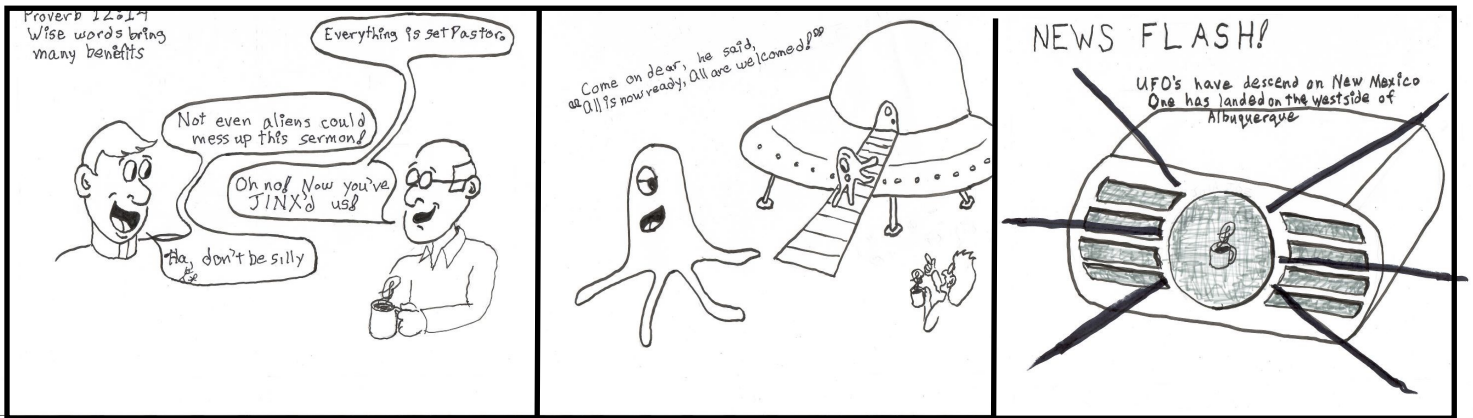
Marge, Russ, and Ruth send a big thank for the February 16 celebration held in honor of Cross of Hope's "Young at Heart". They were delighted to have such a wonderful celebration and to receive cards and baskets of goodies!



Community Outreach News



Cross of Hope Church and School is collecting items to bless the animals at **Watermelon Mountain Ranch**. This no kill shelter needs pet food, dishes, leashes, toys, blankets, and towels. We will be collecting donations through March 14. Thank you for your generosity as we partner together for this service project.



Lunch Bunch



Longhorn Steakhouse
Wednesday, March 12, 2025
 9975 Coors Bypass
 at 1:00 pm

Please call Florence Begay or email her for a head count by February 12.
 Phone: 505-363-5827, email: florencebegay2011@gmail.com.

We have a star among us!

Would you like to attend a great musical. Our very own pastor (Adam) is currently performing in Man of La Mancha from now until March 23.

[Purchase tickets here](#) or check on the Musical Theater Southwest website.



Making FAITH Connections

FRIENDS + FAITH + EVERYDAY LIFE

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.

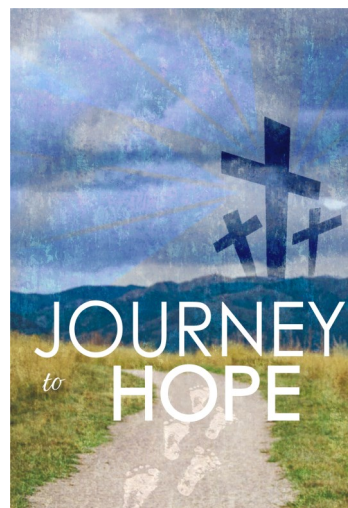
COH Small Group Ministry

March 2 Transfiguration (*Last Sunday after Epiphany*) **Generosity**

We are continuing the journey theme from the first eight weeks of this year. We've journeyed to community, reconciliation, peace, and generosity. The focus of Lent will be "Journey to Hope".

Journey to Hope

March 9	First Sunday in Lent	Wilderness
March 16	Second Sunday in Lent	Trust
March 23	Third Sunday in Lent	Direction
March 30	Fourth Sunday in Lent	Family
April 6	Fifth Sunday of Lent	Intention



A Special Valentine's Day Celebration

On February 8, Cross of Hope enjoyed seeing all our friends from Special the Needs Bible School



Many came!

They enjoyed the music!



They all sang!

February was Full of Fun

Dessert Night



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.

thrivent

Matthew J Klandrud, ChFC®, RICP®, CKA®

Wealth Advisor

Valley Consulting Group
 matthew.klandrud@thrivent.com
 connect.thrivent.com/matthew-klandrud

Office 480-237-3669 • **Office** 505-271-0065
 2222 S Dobson Road, Ste 700 Mesa, AZ 85202
 6565 Americas Pkwy NE, Ste 200 Albuquerque, NM 87110



thrivent

Stacey E Marz, FIC, CLTC®

Financial Consultant

Valley Consulting Group
 stacey.marz@thrivent.com
 connect.thrivent.com/stacey-marz

Office 480-237-3669 • **Office** 505-271-0065
 2222 S Dobson Rd, Ste 700 Mesa, AZ 85202
 6565 Americas Pkwy NE, Ste 200 Albuquerque, NM 87110



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

Pastor Adam Berndt, Margie Reed -President,
 Sherrie Simek -Vice President, Greg Morrison –
 Treasurer, Janet Conlon - Secretary, Bob
 Arseneau, Jessica Williams, Ron Wirths, and
 Ron Cordova.

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF ALBUQUERQUE

SPRING 2025 CLASSICS CONCERT!

Conductor: John Yuan

RAVEL: BOLERO

Beethoven: Symphony No. 1

Dvorak: Slavonic Dance No. 7

Mendelssohn: Concerto for Flute

(Transcription of the Violin Concerto, Op. 64)

Tomar Duman, Flute Solo

DATES AND LOCATIONS:

March 16, Sunday, 2:00 pm

Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church
8600 Academy, NE

March 23, Sunday, 2:30 pm

St. John XXIII Catholic Community Church
4831 Tramway Ridge Dr., NE

**WE HOPE THAT YOU CAN JOIN US FOR THIS
 GREAT PRESENTATION!**

Susan Rivera, Director of School Ministry
Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School



6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW
 Albuquerque, NM 87120-2639

esdirector@crossofhope.org

School (505) 897-1832



Courtney Knutla, Preschool Director
Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School



6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW
 Albuquerque, NM 87120-2639

pssupport@crossofhope.org

Preschool (505) 899-0928

www.crossofhope.org



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.

March Book Suggestions

by Dee Gutierrez

Jesus Doesn't Care About Your Messy House: He Cares About Your Heart- Dana K. White

Your house can never be good enough to please God—not because you can't scrub it or declutter hard enough, but because that is never what He was looking for in the first place.

Angels: God's Secret Agents - Billy Graham

Dr. Graham's knowledge and perspective will make you aware of the angelic beings that are real and who associate with God Himself, administering His works and plans in our lives.

Jesus Through the Eyes of Women-Rebecca McLaughlin

What did women see in this first-century Jewish rabbi and what can we learn as we look through their eyes today?