



Love • Transform • Serve

RAYS of HOPE JOURNAL

December 2025, Volume 43, Issue 12

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.

A festive poster for the December Worship Schedule. The background is decorated with green pine branches, gold stars, gold and red ornaments, and white gift boxes. The text is centered and uses a mix of green, red, and black fonts. The schedule includes the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of Advent, Las Posadas, Christmas Eve Worship, Christmas Day Worship, and the 1st Sunday of Christmas.

December Worship

SCHEDULE

2nd Sunday of Advent
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7TH
8:45AM & 10:45AM

3rd Sunday of Advent
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14TH
8:45AM & 10:45AM

Las Posadas
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17TH
6:00 to 7:30 PM

4th Sunday of Advent
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21ST
8:45AM & 10:45AM

Christmas Eve Worship
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH
4:00PM/ Children's Worship
6PM/ Praise + Team, 8PM/ Choir

Christmas Day Worship
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25TH
10AM Worship

1st Sunday of Christmas
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28TH
10AM Worship

Made with PosterMyWall.com

Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School

6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW

Albuquerque, NM 87120

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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.

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School News



Merry Christmas

**Preschool Play
December 13**

School continued on page 3

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.

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



Love • Transform • Serve

School News

School continued from page 2

Wishing You Joy, Love, and God's Peace

As we move through this joyful season, our preschoolers have been busy learning, celebrating, and growing together! We loved welcoming families for Donuts with Dads - two wonderful mornings filled with smiles, treats, and special time together. In the classroom, the children are excitedly preparing for our upcoming Christmas play, practicing songs and sharing the story of Jesus' birth with joyful hearts. This month, we're also learning about God's forgiveness and remembering that He created each of us to do good.

As I continue settling into my new role as director, I've been reflecting on how grateful I am for the kindness, patience, and prayerful support shown by the church, families and staff. Each day has brought new opportunities to learn, lead, and grow alongside this incredible community. I truly feel blessed to walk with these children during their precious early years and look forward to all that God has in store for this season.

Warm Regards,

Trisha McClain, Director of Preschool Ministry

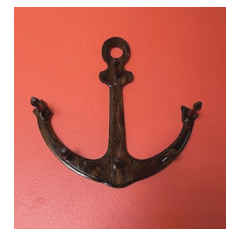


The elementary and preschool give great thanks to the Talor Ranch Neighborhood Association for their donation of \$400.00.



Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8



School continued on page 4

School continued from page 3

More Dads, Kids, Fellowship and Donuts . . .



Sharing answers to table questions



Sharing donuts with Dad via Facetime



Dad is proud of these two!



Special time with Dad



Wonderful lemonade and coffee

Dad is enjoying conversation and time with his boys.



Students will be on Winter Break December 22, 2025 thru January 5, 2026

Council Corner

Sherrie Simek, Council President

November is behind us and December lies ahead. Before leaving November, I would like to take a moment to be in gratitude for the members of Church Council for the work they do, and in gratitude to Pastor Adam for his leadership and guidance. Council met on Saturday, November 22 for discussion on several on-going projects:

- Solar— Check out minutes on the bulletin board for updates.
- Duane Meneely updated the council on the completed research by the three-person team of Pat Benchik, Duane Meneely, and Rick Alpers, regarding the columbarium. Next steps involve determining specific permit requirements.
- Work has been completed on updating our governing documents, the constitution and by-laws, utilizing the model constitution from The Rocky Mountain Synod. Review and discussion will be held by the Council in January before presentation to the assembly.
- Pastor's report included:
 - Expectations moving forward for assistance and support in expansion of our ministries.
 - Stewardship
 - A dedicated restricted gift
- A preliminary discussion was held regarding next year's school tuition. Additional discussion and review will continue in January. Due to the new state's decree on universal childcare, questions were raised as to our reimbursement for early childhood development. Trisha McClain, our preschool director, has her finger on the pulse of what is going on, asking pertinent questions to get some answers.
- Greg Morrison presented a detailed report on a health care benefit option available for full-time employees. We approved this option after discussion within the Council.

Thank you, Greg, for diligent research and follow-through on available plans and thank you, Bob, for planting a seed for discernment and thought in January

Come visit us on Sundays at Council Connections where Council members are at the front door, waiting to greet you, listening to you and answering questions you may have. We are available for you, contact us. We are honored to answer the call to serve on Council. Thank you for this privilege.



First Communion

Sunday, November 30, was a day of great celebration with First Communion for five of our school-age children. We also began Advent to prepare the way for our Savior during this month.





The Mission of Cross of Hope Faith Connections Group

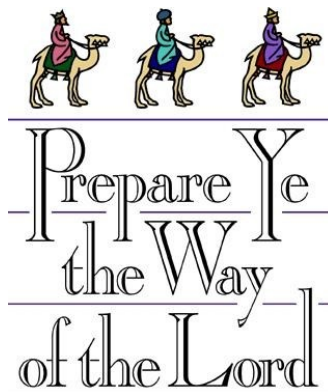
To provide an opportunity for all people to share Christ's love and authentic community in a small group setting where lives are transformed through growth in faith and service to others.

COH Small Group Ministry

Let it Go

'Let It Go' is the powerful central song from Disney's Frozen sung by Elsa as she both comes to terms with her unique powers and how embracing them allows her to become who she was born to be! The original movie was released a few days before Addy was born and getting to tell the story on the stage alongside her this month has forever given Frozen a place in my heart I hadn't intended. Since my 2025 Advent will be full of Frozen performances around the rest of this cozy and reflective time of year, I thought it might be nice to let the fun into our doors. Advent is a time of waiting and watching, pondering and preparing our hearts, our spaces, our world to receive the good news of God with us. What things are we being called to let go of in order to let the true love of God grow through our lives?

December 7	Despair
December 14	Fear
December 21	Expectation
December 24	The light of Christ
December 28	Lessons and Carols
January 4 -	It's Still Christmas



We were blessed with a glorious Cantata on November 23 from our choir.

Our Camp@COH
will be practicing and
learning lines
December 3 and 10
for our Las Posadas
celebration.



An Advent Midweek Worship Experience



LAS POSADAS

Wednesday, December 17,
6:00-7:30 PM

All are welcome!
Come and worship by
following Mary and Joseph
as they search for rest on
their journey!

- Visit a real, live donkey!
- Enjoy a fiesta of good food!
- Live mariachi music!
- Pinata!
- Fellowship and fun!



Cross of Hope Church and School
6104 Taylor Ranch Rd NW, Albuquerque, NM 87120
505-897-0047, 102 • Crossofhope.org

Columbarium Update

By Rick Alpers

This committee exists to research various options pertaining to the establishment of a columbarium here at our facility. Currently we are looking into placement logistics, types of niche housings, landscaping considerations and so forth. Our purpose is only to serve the congregation, not to impose any specific agenda on this matter.

The more we research, the more we realize the complexity of such an endeavor, which includes company considerations and reputation, costs, legal issues and permits as well as various congregation desires. The committee is reporting to Council, and like any important matter, the ultimate decision will be made by members of the congregation. If you have any concerns or questions, or would like to join the committee, just contact a committee member: Duane Meneely, Pat Benchik and Rick Alpers.

Lunch Bunch



December 10

1pm

Olive Garden (New one!)

3823 Coors

RSVP to Florence Begay

At 505-363-5827 or email florencebegay2011@gmail.com by

December 8.



**December 14 after the
10:45am service**

If you would like to help, please contact RC Jordan (media@crossofhope) and let her know you are planning to help. She will be ordering pizza.



Congratulations



*Cinda & Kimbo
November, 9 2025*



Kevin Benhem	1
Noelle Kouri	2
Art Kavanaugh	5
Lynne Bagby	8
Luke Walter	8
Beth Christians	8
Star Cooley	10
Kathy Branson	11
Susan Rivera	11
Linda Willoughby	11
Tim George	12
Adelle Adams	13
Addy Berndt	15
Jericho Adams	16
Laurie Adams	17
Karen Hawley	18
Ed Christians	19
Carol Wirths	20
Vicki Bachman	21
Jason Adams	27
John Curtin	31
Martha Hughes	31

Jerry and Laura Burton	8	35
David and Karen Wilson	27	45
Ron and Carol Wirths	28	51
Tanya and Steve Zynda	30	30



Happy Hope-r

The Johannsen's



Renae

Mark

Birthdate: Oct. 12, 1971	Oct. 21, 1971
Birthplace: Omaha, NE	Omaha, NE
Married: Oct. 18, 1996	Where: Bellevue, NE
Children: 2: Makenna, 25 & Luke, 22	
Occupation: Retired; enjoying life	Configuration Manager
Hobbies: Pickleball, jogging	Guitar, foreign languages (Spanish and German), someday golf

Marc grew up in Connecticut. (His last name is Danish.) He has a brother and a sister.

Marc was in the Air Force and was stationed at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, NE. He was discharged in 1995. Marc attended Bellevue University obtaining a degree in Business Administration in 1996. He found he had an interest in computers. At the time we were approaching the challenge of 2000 – referred to as Y2K. Marc saw an ad looking for people to become programmers. He entered a six-month program and obtained a job at the five-month point. Afterward he worked in IT in various roles, including project management and account management. In 2002, he joined the Air Force Reserves and was at Offutt Air Force base (familiar territory). This was a result of a friend encouraging him to sign up. Marc retired from the Reserves in 2019 and got involved with government service.

Marc shared that his interest in German was sparked by an upcoming business trip to Germany. Gute Reise (Safe travels). By the time you read this, Marc will be home and you can ask him about his trip.

Renae was born in the same hospital as Marc. What a fun coincidence. Renae has a sister who still lives in Bellevue NE. As you know, Renae's mother, Barb Oberhelman (who you will read about in a bit), moved here with Marc and Renae about a year ago.

Renae attended University of Nebraska and graduated with a degree in Psychology in 1994. She worked for Lutheran Brotherhood, now known as Thrivent, for about four years. She recruited agents and did training. When her daughter, Makenna, was born, she decided she would stay at home to raise her - and later her son, Luke. When the kids were in school, Renae occupied herself by working at her church (Emmanuel Lutheran) in various capacities, including being a janitor,

Johannsen continued from page 11

working on the 'books', various fundraising activities, along with other volunteer involvement. Renae said this was the only church she had ever attended.

Makenna lives in Kansas City, Missouri and works in Digital Marketing. Luke is stationed at McGuire Air Force Base in Wrightstown, NJ. He works in petroleum, oil, and lubricants filling airplanes with gas.

Renae's dad also worked for Thrivent and had his own agency. He did many of the same things Renae did. She says she followed in his footsteps.

Renae met Marc through a dating service in 1996. Six months and one day later after they met, they were married.

When Renae's dad died in 2023 the family (which included her mom, Barb) decided it would be a good time to leave the cold of Nebraska. Since her folks had 'snow bired' in Mesa, Arizona, they knew they wanted to go to the Southwest. Marc started looking for a new job and he got an offer from a consulting company, Odyssey, which works with the Air Force and contracts with Sandia Labs.

Barb Oberhelman



Birthdate: Sept. 18, 1945	
Birthplace: Ft. Dodge, IA	
Married: To Ron who passed away in 2023	Where: Bellevue, NE
Children: 2: Vicki & Renae	They are 13 months apart
Occupation: Homemaker, underwriter,	
Hobbies: Interior decorating	

Barb (Renae's mother) grew up in Manson, Iowa. After high school, she worked in Des Moines, Iowa (the BIG city) for five years at an insurance company. Barb was an underwriter and typist. She and her husband moved to Omaha, Nebraska where she continued to work as an underwriter. She quit as she and Ron began their family. Barb stayed home for ten years with the kids. Then she had a job for the *Bellevue Leader* (the local newspaper) followed by a job with Wickcoff Color Corp. There she worked in the office for ten years. At this point, computers were coming on the scene. Ron had started his own Thrivent agency which does financial adviser work. Barb was doing what we might fondly call 'front office' work.

I asked Barb if she had a funny story to tell about Renae. As it usually goes, mom thought it was funny and child not so much. Anyway, they were vacationing at the Wisconsin Dells. They went out to eat. Renae was about 8 or 10 years old and ordered onion rings. She took a bite and the onion

Oberhelman continued from page 12

slid out of the breading. Renae went “yuuuu.” You see, Renae does not like onions (to this day) but she likes the breading. I will say Renae was a good sport about Barb telling this story. I think most of us can identify with this experience. Thanks, Renae.

As I mentioned earlier, Barb and Ron snow birded in Mesa, Arizona for many years. They stayed in a trailer park with other snow birders. Barb said they had a lot of fun and has fond memories. When the family was deciding on where to move, Arizona was a consideration – the job offer for Marc came from NM. That finalized their decision. They had driven through Albuquerque often and thought it would work for them. They settled in Mirehaven. The family likes New Mexico and is doing some exploring on the weekends.

Angel Tree Ministry



This year, Cross of Hope again partnered up with the APS Homeless Project for their Angel Tree Ministry Program. The social workers and counselors involved in this process have selected families most in need of assistance this year. Cross of Hope will be working to provide Christmas for six of these families.

If you are interested in participating and have not yet had a chance to sign up, Deney Perkins will be available Sunday, December 7 in between services to assist you in choosing gifts for family members.

All gifts MUST be returned to the church no later than December 14, 2025. If you have any questions, or would like to help in any way, please call Deney Perkins (505-321-5549).



Banner Babes' America Salute Tea

By Diane Carrico

It might not been last year's tea with the Queen, but the Banner Babe Friendship Tea this year was a close second. The theme for this year's tea was **America Salute**, and it was very evident in the tables decked out in red, white and blue placemats, napkins and other decorations that made everything look so patriotic.

The afternoon started with a lovely tea prepared by the Banner Babes and served by our grade school, middle school, and high school students. Our servers did a wonderful job. After tea, there was a fun time of questions and answers about our Armed Forces. Then the wonderful Ropp Family led us in a patriotic sing along.

The final fun thing of the day was the raffle. The Banner Babes along with other friends and Cross of Hope members made about 85-90 items for the raffle. The money from the tea and the raffle goes to several different charities as well as supplying the Banner Babes with money for our graduation quilts, baptism quilts and comfort quilts.

A big thank you to everyone who helped with the tea and a big thank you to all the ladies and gentlemen who attended. See you next year.



The Church Office will be closed

12/24 at noon on Christmas Eve
12/25 Christmas Day

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

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 cohouncil@crossofhope.org**

Pastor Adam Berndt, Sherrie Simek –President
 Greg Morrison –Treasurer, Jessica Williams,-
 Secretary, Bob Arseneau, Laura Burton, Ron
 Cordova, Art Kavanaugh, Todd Olsen,

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**Symphony Orchestra of Albuquerque
 Christmas Concerts 2025**

with the Algodones Elementary Mustangs Youth Choir

Conductor: John Yuan

Dates and Locations:

December 7, Sunday, 2:00pm

Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 8600 Academy,
 NE

December 14, Sunday, 2:30pm

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

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



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esdirector@crossofhope.org
 School (505) 897-1832



**Trisha McClain, Director of Preschool Ministry
 Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School**



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 Preschool (505) 899-0928
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Emergency Meals
 Family Emergency
 Illness
 Death

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- 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

Onsite Worship Times:

Sunday - 8:45 a.m.

Sunday 10:45 a.m.

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

December Book Suggestions

by Dee Gutierrez

A Prairie Christmas Collections - Tracie Peterson, Tracey Bateman, Deborah Raney...

Experience Christmas on the historical American Great Plains as retold by nine different multi-published authors, including Tracie Peterson and Deborah Raney. Follow pioneers, immigrants, and orphans through their adventures, heartaches, challenges, victories, and romances.

The Religious Life of Robert E. Lee - R. David Cook

Robert E. Lee was many things—accomplished soldier, military engineer, college president, family man, agent of reconciliation, polarizing figure. He was also a person of deep Christian conviction. In this biography of the famous Civil War general, R. David Cook shows how Lee's Christian faith shaped his crucial role in some of the most pivotal events in American history.

The Birth of Christ- Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Spurgeon shows us the glorious miracle of Christ's birth to a lowly virgin. The true meaning of Christmas and its message of love, communion and salvation.