

*Alleluia cannot always be our song while here below... (Hymn 318 in Evangelical Lutheran Worship)*

## Fasting from the *Alleluia* to strengthen our praise!



We established last month that I am no expert on the spiritual discipline of fasting. I have been fasting from the 'alleluia' since I can remember during Lent. It was an intentional act of discipline by my church to both embody the season of humility and reflection, and connect with the church beyond our walls in this season of preparation to celebrate with unbridled joy the good news of the resurrection of our Lord on Easter. Fasting from the 'alleluia' is nothing new as the singing or saying the word alleluia has historically been suspended during these forty

days in the Western church going back to at least the fifth century. And still, the fast from the 'alleluia' is contemporary as it is new for those who are new to the Christian faith or have not participated in the communal fast before.

For the first time in my time at Cross of Hope, we formally bid farewell as we sang the hymn "Alleluia, Song of Gladness" (ELW 318) at early worship the Sunday before Ash Wednesday. The text is a translation of an eleventh-century Latin text that compares an alleluia-less Lent to the exile of the Israelites in Babylon. The text then anticipates the joy of Easter when glad alleluias will return in all their heavenly splendor.

So where is the 'alleluia' now? You can find a visual reminder of our fast in the purple shrouded box at the foot of the cross in the Worship Space. This is where our alleluia sticks are 'buried' as we prepare with prayer and refectation for the great Easter celebration.

*Alleluia* is a word of great praise to God in the life of the church and is based on the Hebrew word, hallelu yah, meaning "praise the Lord." God grant you in this time of fasting from this particular way of praise a space of deep reflection and gratitude for the gift and grace of God in our life as we prepare to burst forth in praise on Easter Sunday!

This year Easter is April 5 and so plan and prepare your Holy Week from this edition of the Rays of Hope!

Peace,

R. Adam Berndt, Pastor



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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](mailto:office@crossofhope.org), [lbagby@crossofhope.org](mailto: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.

**School News**

**Open Enrollment for Cross of Hope School begins March 3.**

School continued on page 3

**Care Outreach**

**Transportation**

Medical Appointments  
 Other Appointments  
 Necessary Errands



**Emergency Meals**

Family Emergency  
 Illness  
 Death

**Assistance is available:**

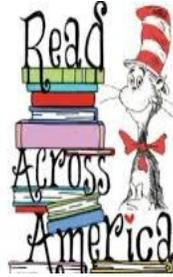
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- In the Great hall
- Call COH office (505)897-0047x102



Love • Transform • Serve

# School News

School continued from page 2



**During Read Across America Week  
Our Preschool is having it's first ever  
Storybook Character Parade!**

**March 5 and 6**



Our annual Butter Braid sale is underway and will be extended through Friday, March 6.

These are delicious for Easter brunch or



Donations include: body wash, shampoo and conditioner, lotion, tooth brushes and toothpaste, deodorant, feminine hygiene products. All donations for our Charity Drive may be placed on the large cart in the Great Hall.

**No School**  
**March 2-3: Parent/Teacher Conferences**  
**March 29 - April 5: Spring Break**



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

Micah 6:8

# Council Corner

by Jessica Williams

There were no pressing agenda items for our February council meeting and therefore our discussion centered around the upcoming budget to be approved at the August annual congregational meeting. This discussion included consideration of both tangibles (new copier for the school, tree trimming) and strategic planning for church mission (mortgage payoff campaign). Overall, it was a brainstorming session bathed in prayer, a respite from the usual business-oriented topics, an opportunity to dream and invite the Holy Spirit to advise.

As always, council members are available each Sunday between services at the front desk for questions or comments. Please come by and say hello. We look forward to seeing you!

Fasting continued from page 1

**HOLY WEEK**  
*@ Cross of Hope*

<p><b><u>SUNDAY, MARCH 29</u></b>                  PALM SUNDAY</p> <p><b><u>THURSDAY, APRIL 2ND</u></b>                  MAUNDY THURSDAY</p> <p><b><u>FRIDAY, APRIL 3RD</u></b>                  GOOD FRIDAY</p> <p><b><u>SUNDAY, APRIL 5TH</u></b>                  EASTER SUNDAY</p>	<p>SUNDAY OF THE PASSION                  WORSHIP @ 10AM                  Worship begins with palms outside</p> <p>WORSHIP @ 7PM                  Worship with foot washing and more</p> <p>WORSHIP @ 7PM                  Worship with the adoration of the cross</p> <p>THE RESSURECTION OF OUR LORD, WORSHIP @ 8:45AM AND 10:45 AM</p>
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[WWW.CROSSOFHOPE.ORG](http://WWW.CROSSOFHOPE.ORG)

# Family Promise of Albuquerque



## Hosting Week of March 8-14

### Program updates

- Family Promise of New Mexico has a new director, T. Michael Trimm.
- New Property purchased with no mortgage after San Pedro was sold and City of ABQ released \$500,000 designated by the county.
- Montgomery Church of Christ (MCC), 7201 Montgomery NE. The parsonage will remain the shelter site for program families until current tenants are assisted to find housing, and renovations to the building sites are complete.

Our March Hosting responsibilities will look the same as previous postings. Hot meals delivered at 5pm to MCC Sunday through Saturday (except Wednesdays), and the delivery person may stay and eat with and visit with families as desired. There will be a staff person present. Two adults and four children (ages 5, 8,10) are currently present. Interviews are continuing this week so Michael will update us as required. FPA will be best served at their site (not at Cross of Hope) due to the children’s needs.

Providing the meals, or groceries for families to cook their own meals will be an option in the future once the new property is ready. Two or more people may wish to work together each evening as there will be more available housing space for sheltering families. The anticipated number could be six families depending on the size of the family. Gift cards, or cash can be provided for families to purchase or make their own meals. Additionally, besides the FPA office, there will be an active “day center” for families to learn new life skills, budgeting, finance, home organization and socializing. Volunteers are encouraged to share cooking or tutoring skills, hands on help to paint and other skills as warranted. The property is gated, monitored, and there are garages for volunteers and staff to park. 314 and 315 Tennessee SE and the court yard is fenced. Several volunteers will be needed fairly soon to assist with painting and final preparations toward the readiness of the new property. Please pray for the opportunities we each can offer to serve the needs of families working toward successful independent living.

We are all the hands and feet of Jesus our Lord and savior as we serve this community. Thank you

Sincerely, Glenna Meneely and Jan Anderson



*For I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in.... vs 40..’ when you did it for the least of these .. you’re doing it to Me.’ Matthew 25: 35 (Paraphrased vs 35-40. LASB)*



FRIENDS + FAITH + EVERYDAY LIFE

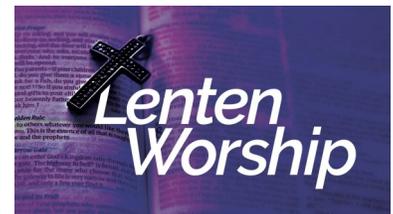
**The Mission of Cross of Hope Faith Connections Group**

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*

## Hungry

Through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving - activities meant to quiet our minds, still our hearts, and allow us to draw near to God, the season of Lent invites us to return to God as the center and guiding norm of our lives. Throughout Lent, we are called to put our priorities in order, and throughout scripture we receive the invitation to examine ourselves. Lent is a forty-day reminder that it is God who saves and we who respond in gratitude. This intentional time of reflection and spiritual practice can leave us feeling hungry as we long for God and the good news of forgiveness, life and salvation. Join us in worship and a 'Making Faith Connections' small group as we share the journey through Lent.



March 1	Second Sunday in Lent	Faith
March 8	Third Sunday in Lent	Love
March 15	Fourth Sunday in Lent	Wholeness
March 22	Sunday in Lent	Resurrection
March 29	Sunday of the Passion	Palm Sunday - Hope
April 2	Maundy Thursday	Purpose
April 3	Good Friday	God
April 5	Vigil of Easter	Light

**Would you like to be part of a small group?**

**Drop in 9:45am** for small group after worship and join in on discussions to dive deeper into the texts for the day and connect with others in faith!

*If you are looking for better times or options for participating in a small group, email RC Jordan at [media@crossofhope.org](mailto:media@crossofhope.org)*

## Interested in Membership at Cross of Hope?

*New members devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers. - Acts 2:42*

During Lent, Pastor Adam will gather with anyone interested in becoming a member of Cross of Hope Lutheran Church. Together we'll 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 form the group. Be invited to talk with Pastor Adam with questions or curiosities.



To join the New Members group please contact RC Jordan at [media@crossofhope.org](mailto:media@crossofhope.org) or 505-897-0047



## Happy Hope-r The Kovarik's



By: Mary Breshahan

**Toni**

**David**

<b>Birthdate:</b> August 23, 1955	September 5, 1954
<b>Birthplace:</b> Toledo, OH	Toledo, OH
<b>Married:</b> October 1, 1977	<b>Where:</b> Toledo, OH
<b>Children:</b> Adam and Lauren	
<b>Occupation:</b> Small Business Advocate	High School Teacher and Coach
<b>Hobbies:</b> Avid reader, genealogy research	Reading, walking, watching sports

Toni's parents were Helen Placzkiewicz and William "Bill" Leon. Helen was a first generation Polish American and worked in Inside Sales at Van Waters and Rogers. Bill was a business owner in Toledo running a third-generation funeral home. His other occupation, and passion, was as a singer (Perry Como crooner-style) with his own band – The Four Keys. He read everything available about the old west and was an accomplished historian. When Toni and David moved to New Mexico, it was the perfect opportunity for Bill to sell the business, retire and follow his dream of living in the West. In 1983, Bill and Helen bought a small ranch in the East Mountains and had a couple of horses. Bill was able to travel around the southwest and expand his knowledge even further.

Toni's sister, Nancy Leon, migrated here too. She is in Albuquerque and attends the second service at Cross of Hope. Toni and David have two children, Adam who is married to Meghan and Lauren who is married to Sara. There are 5 grandchildren between them ranging in age from 3 to 14 years old.

David's parents were Ambrose Kovarik and Dorothy Tober. His dad was Czech and his mother German. They were first generation born in the United States. At approximately the ages of ten, eleven and twelve, they grew up in the middle of the depression. Ambrose lost his father when he was 17 years old. David's parents met when they were in high school and married when Ambrose was 22 and Dorothy was 20.

David's dad served in World War II. Before he left for the war, David's parents had a little girl. Ambrose eventually landed in Normandy at Omaha Beach. He was a prolific writer and Dorothy kept all of his letters. The letters stretched from boot camp all the way until Ambrose returned home from the war. Each letter asked how his daughter was. Toni created a series of books using the letters Ambrose sent home and David said the letters gave him another view of his father.

The family lived on the border of Michigan and Ohio. A lot of sugar beets were grown in the area. Ambrose worked for the company that made the flavor enhancer 'Accent' which comes from sugar

Kovarik continued from page 7

beets. When the company moved Ambrose went to work for AP Parts Inc. That is where he spent most of his work years (1957-85). AP made mufflers and tail pipes in Toledo, Ohio.

David has two sisters and a brother (who is deceased). His oldest sister is 84 and his younger sister, 77 years old, living in Toledo and Cincinnati, Ohio respectively.

Toni and David met in high school on a student council exchange. Toni attended Bowling Green State University where she received a B.A. in Fashion Merchandising. From about fourth grade, David knew he wanted to be a teacher. He attended Heidelberg College his freshman year, and then transferred to Bowling Green State University where Toni was going to school. He graduated with a B.S. in Education. He was the first in his family to graduate from college. David's parents were very supportive during his time in school.

When Toni and David married, Toni was a fashion buyer for Macy's and David was teaching in the inner city in Toledo. They both started to look for new job opportunities in a place that had warmer weather and moved to New Mexico in 1978. Toni found employment in Albuquerque as a retail manager and was involved in a women's business group. Toni was hired by The Broadway, and then Montgomery Ward, working at the national level. She worked with a team that developed new business models that were tested in Texas and Louisiana.

She spent six years with the company and loved it. As it happens, children arrived. Toni gave up her retail career for the family and moved into government contracting. She spent 21 years at Sandia Labs in three different careers, including a position as a Licensing Executive. This entailed finding uses for new technology and patents and transferring them to the business world.

David arrived in Albuquerque after Toni. He interviewed at several schools (in person) to see if there were any opportunities available. At the time, St. Pius was located where Uptown is now. He walked into the school and immediately received an interview. As it happened, the person who was supposed to teach social studies had just resigned (the day before school was to start). Knowing David was not Catholic, he was asked by the principal if he had a problem taking students to Mass. He said, "no" and was immediately offered employment on the condition he coach girls field hockey. He knew nothing about this sport and needed to do some research. He hit the ground running.

David had a rich and satisfying career at St. Pius X High School. He coached baseball, where, as the varsity assistant, his teams won five state championships. He was also involved in "Model UN" and was a Coordinator for the "Close-Up" government immersion project sponsored by the U.S. Congress. David and select students traveled to Washington DC in the spring. There he met other educators from various western states for a teacher's program. During his tenure at St. Pius, he took a year off and taught at Menaul School. The experience gave him a different teaching perspective.

Initially, Toni and David lived in the Northeast Heights where they attended Faith Lutheran. When their kids were a little older, the family moved to the Westside and began a search for another church. Their children desired a smaller church and Cross of Hope fit the bill. Pastor Ron Barth was working at organizing a new church and attracting founding members. The Kovarik family joined in 1991. By that time Pastor Dale was the pastor.

What has kept Toni and David at Cross of Hope all these years is the relationships they have formed with other members. Toni described the congregation as "loving, kind and energetic. It feels like family". The kids loved it here." They have been members for 34 years.

Kovarik continued on page 9

Kovarik continued from page 8

David is part of the Praise+Team. You can see him, and Toni, every Sunday at the second service unless they are babysitting or visiting their son and family in Portland, Oregon. Wow! So glad to have you here.

# Lunch Bunch



**March 11, 2026 at 1pm**

## **BJ's Restaurant**

10000 Coors Blvd NW

Please RSVP to Florence Begay

505-363-5827 or email

[florencebegay2011@gmail.com](mailto:florencebegay2011@gmail.com)



## **Join us for Fun, Fellowship, Bible study, and S'mores**

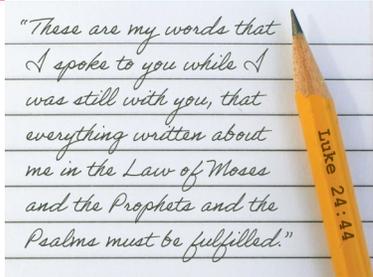
### **What's on the Menu?**

- March 4: Pizza**
- March 11: Chicken Strips**
- March 18: Pizza**
- March 25: Sub Sandwiches**





## Heart Strings



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

	Day
Margie Reed	1
Kevin Perkins	3
Claudia Russo	4
David Jennings	4
Lindsay O'Roark	6
Sylvia Oelsner	6
Charles Hendrickson	13
Laura Burton	13
Pat Benchik	15
Ethan McClain	17
Todd Bramley	21
Xander Bencomo	24
Elizabeth Jennings	25
Joel A. Wickert	26
Linda George	27
Jahn Wright	28
Jasmyn Soto	28

<p><b>Wendy Harrison</b> 6137 Agate Ave NW Albuquerque, NM 87120</p> <p><b>Ruth Hinkel</b> Fairwinds @RioRancho Apt 146 920 Riverview Dr SE Rio Rancho NM 87124</p> <p><b>Gary and Fran Hveem</b> 884 Evening Primrose Lane Bernalillo, NM 87004</p>	<p><b>Charlie and Gini Murphy</b> 548 Eastlake Dr. Rio Rancho, NM 87120</p> <p><b>Marjorie Pool</b> Fairwinds @RioRancho Apt 376 920 Riverview Dr SE Rio Rancho, NM 87124</p> <p><b>David and Diane Pressel</b> 543 Whisper Pointe St SW Albuquerque, NM 87121</p>
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	Day	Years
Duane and Glenna Meneely	1	51
Ed and Beth Christians	3	25
Rich and Rosemary Neely	13	44
Ken and Lynnette Anselmi	25	59

**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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**Cross of Hope Church and School  
Congregational Council Team**  
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**

**Spring Concert 2026**

**Beethoven's 7th Symphony**  
**Tschaikowsky: Piano Concerto No.1;**  
Kristin Ditlow, Piano Solo

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**DATES AND LOCATIONS:**

**March 8, Sunday, 2pm**  
Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
8600 Academy, NE

**March 14, 7:30pm**  
Keller Hall/University of New Mexico

**March 15, 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**




6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW  
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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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Other Appointments		Illness
Necessary Errands		Death

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- In the Great Hall
- Call COH office (505)897-0047x102



**CROSS OF HOPE Church & School**  
Love • Transform • Serve

# 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](mailto:office@crossofhope.org)  
[www.crossofhope.org](http://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.

## March Book Suggestions

by Dee Gutierrez

### Keeping Faith- Jodi Picoult

The book is about a custody battle involving a seven-year-old girl, Faith White, who may be seeing God.

### A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence and Power - Jimmy Carter

Jimmy Carter that addresses the global discrimination and violence against women as a major human rights violation, arguing that religious texts are often misinterpreted to justify inequality and abuse, and calling for religious and world leaders to take action to secure equal rights for women.

\* *Charlie Anderson, church parishioner, suggested*

### Migrant God: A Christian Vision in Immigrant Justice- Isaac Samuel Villegas

Migrant God takes readers to the front lines of immigrant justice activism where Christians are putting hope into action.