



Love • Transform • Serve

RAYS of HOPE JOURNAL

August 2025, Volume 43, Issue 8

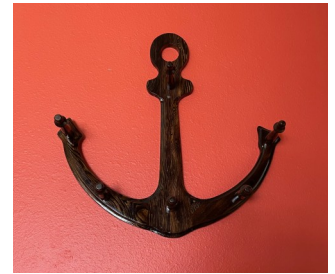
Mission Statement

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.

Welcome Back to School!

He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

I am beyond thrilled to begin another school year with Cross of Hope and our incredible community of parents, students, staff, and congregation. Our work together last year truly blessed us all with volunteers at events, help from Women on Wednesday for organizing our book and resource room, constructing and installing new bookshelves and bulletin board strips in the hallway, painting the preschool classrooms, setting up and adding security to the teacher laptops and student Chromebooks, and receiving donated lunch tables!



Your generosity was overwhelming and I know that our school is glowing because of it. Thank you! Teachers are preparing for the new year with professional development, safety training, and ***Anchoring in Jesus*** with a focus on growing in grace. This, along with our verse in our heading, will be the heart of each and every classroom. I look forward to our staff and students and watching God transform their lives by His love. Students, grades 1st through 5th will return August 11, and our kindergarten and preschool students will begin August 13. We are so excited!

This year we are looking forward to:

- Welcoming three new staff members
- Continuing our journey of accreditation in our elementary school with COGNIA
- Adding new student Chromebooks, teacher laptops, and offering a technology class
- Continuing our community service projects to carry out the mission of loving our neighbors.

We would love to partner with you. Please know that you are wanted and needed as we build a strong community with our church and school. Feel free to contact me with any questions or ideas you may have. My door is always open! I look forward to serving alongside each and every one of you!

Blessings,

Susan F. Rivera
Director of School Ministry
esdirector@crossofhope.org



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:	RC Jordan
Editorial Staff:	Lynne Bagby Mary Bresnahan Beth Cretsinger Sheri Phillips Linda Willoughby
Contributors:	The Nurse's Corner 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

ENROLLMENT NOW OPEN

PRESCHOOL-5TH GRADE

- ✓ 5 Star Nationally Accredited Preschool
- ✓ Researched Based Curriculum
- ✓ Low Student/Teacher Ratio
- ✓ Safe and Secure Campus

ENROLL NOW

Visit Our Website
www.crossofhope.org/schools/

505-897-1832

6104 Taylor Ranch Rd. NW 87120



Cross of Hope School is a welcoming Christ-centered community providing high quality education in a nurturing environment that respects each child's development.





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

COUNCIL CORNER

by Margie Reed, Outgoing COH Council President

“God is always fair. He will remember how you helped His people in the past and how you are still helping them. You belong to God, and he won’t forget the love you have shown His people.”
Heb. 6:10

Passing the Gavel



I knew I would find writing this article to be bitter-sweet! After almost eight years I am both honored and humbled to have served God and His people (COH Congregation) through the ministry of the Church Council. But the time has come for me to pass the gavel and responsibilities on to a new leader. I have learned so much about the operations of the church and school.

Please Consider being a Council Member

Our Annual Congregation Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, August 24, following the 10am indoor service. Besides requesting approval of the September 24, 2024 and June 8, 2025, Congregational Minutes, and the approval of the 2025-2026 Budget we will be electing four new members to the council. These new members will join our four current members Sherrie Simek, Greg Morrison, Ron Cordova, and Jessica Williams at the September meeting where they will elect the officers of the Council.

Council terms have ended for some of us, so we say goodbye to Janet Conlon, Bob Arseneau, Ron Wirths, and Margie Reed. Thank you for all you have done for Cross of Hope. God Speed to you all!

There is a new council member recruitment in process. We are asking Church members to consider God’s call to Leadership. The Council is the governing body of the Church and approves budgets, property projects, school-related projects, etc. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month from 6:30pm until about 8pm. It’s a time for the council to come together to discuss matters concerning the congregation.

Council Minutes – July 22, 2025

I can’t start talking about the July meeting until I mention what an incredible Secretary Janet Conlon has been.. Each meeting no matter how much conversation was going on (a lot of times at the same time) Janet produced minutes that reflected every aspect of the meeting.

July’s meeting began with a prayer by Pastor Adam and a devotional by Margie Reed.

Susan Rivera, Director of School Ministries, updated the Council on the school enrollment. Currently there are 46 Elementary students registered with another four in process. The Preschool has 36 students enrolled and they even have a wait list.

The majority of the Elementary and Preschool staff is returning. Several new teachers have been hired. Jennifer Vola, Second Grade; Rebecca Lovato, Technology, lunch coverage and classroom support; and Preschool Educational Assistants, Kristina Castillo and Amber Griffith.

Courtney Knutilla, Director of Preschool, will be leaving COH effective August 29, 2025. We wish Courtney the best in her new dream job. You will be missed!

After an extensive review of the proposed 2025-2026 budget, a motion was made to accept the proposed budget for the new fiscal school year 2025-2026, and it was accepted by the Council. It will be posted on the website prior to the Congregational meeting for review. Greg Morrison,

Council continued page 4

Council continued from page 3

Treasurer, will present the budget for review and approval by the voting members of the Congregation at the August 24 meeting.

Employee Manual changes and updates were completed. The Council approved it. Now it's time to get the manuals printed and ready to handout to all employees.

Other discussions included a proposal for roof maintenance, new security cameras inside and outside of COH, and a solar project update. Pastor Adam ended the meeting with a prayer.

As for what I will do in my spare time – take care of the “Garden of Hope”, volunteer in the Office, update our Church manuals, assist with services, help when needed, resume my personal family ancestry research and just BREATHE!

Property Update

By: Sherrie Simek

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” *2 Corinthians 9:7*

Have you had a chance to view the beautiful pink lilies blooming in Rudy's garden? The Bible mentions lilies in several contexts, most notably in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6:28-30 where Jesus uses them as an example of God's care of creation. Hope

Gardeners work hard to nurture flowers and gardens, trees and grass. Shrubs have been trimmed at the exits and entrances so you are able to view traffic coming at you. The “Big Ditch” (area between our parking lot and fire department) has been weeded and sprayed for weeds.

School begins soon (What??) The two turf areas have been vacuumed and cleaned, the gaga pit and volleyball gravel area has been weeded and raked, the playground bark and gravel area has been weeded and raked and the area behind the preschool has been weeded and raked in anticipation. All is ready!

Do you see a common thread here? Weeding, weeding, and weeding as summer continues. Inside, camera installation was completed. Stained ceiling tiles have been replaced.

Until next month.....



Annual Congregation Meeting
August 24
after 10am service

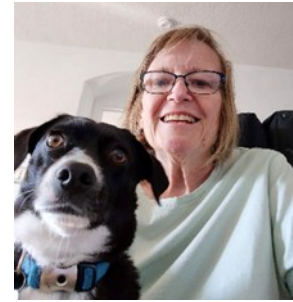
Lunch to follow



Happy Hope-r

Kathy Gorman & Bart

By: Mary Bresnahan



Kathy

Bart

Birthdate: Oct. 28, 1963	Feb. 14, 2013
Birthplace: Van Nyes, CA	?
Occupation: History Professor	"Twerp"
Hobbies: Bart, jigsaw puzzles, watching all sports	Agility, picking up breadcrumbs at church

Some time ago I interviewed Coal, our school therapy dog. I learned a few things and had great fun. Since then, I have had my eye on Bart, Kathy Gorman's dog who accompanies Kathy to church on Sunday. Bart was rescued as a surrender at the West side shelter. Because of that Kathy is unsure what mixture he is.

Bart's predecessor was getting up in years and Kathy's mother, Bev, thought it would be a good idea for Kathy to get another dog. So, Kathy and Bev went "kennel visiting." They found Bart who was just over one year old. Because Kathy's brother-in-law is named Bart they had to make a phone call and get his approval. Now the family has Bart, the dog, and Bart, the human. Since Kathy and Bev went "kennel visiting" in October, Bart turned out to be a birthday gift for Kathy. Six months after Bart's adoption, Kathy's older dog died.

First order of business was for Kathy and Bart to go through obedience training. They attended both the basic and advanced classes. Bart has a lot of energy. Kathy said "he always liked to run and jump on things." With a little thought Kathy decided Bart would enjoy agility work. Kathy purchased a few items to get Bart started. Bart loved it. Now that Kathy is in a house with a bigger back yard the agility area has expanded. Bart loves it.

Bart comes to church with Kathy. He greets people who sit near him and watches for Ruth Hinkel to arrive. For some reason, Bart does not like to be petted on his head. One can only surmise that it has something to do with his early life experiences. However, he loves to have his back scratched. If you ever encounter Bart keep these two items in mind. Bart says he loves his home and life with Kathy. Every morning, he watches out the window for the hot air balloons. Of course he barks at them.



Bart has a best friend in Gretchen Comfort's Rhodesian Ridgeback named Steffie. She is larger than normal for a Ridgeback but that doesn't intimidate Bart.

On the other side of friendship, Kathy's sister has an Australian Shepherd, Abby, that Bart doesn't particularly like. Kathy says she is a very sweet dog that was adopted when her owner died. Kathy and her sister are going to see if they rectify that. Be prepared Bart!

Kathy and Bart continued from page 5



Bart is not an official “therapy dog” (or emotional support) but in many ways he fulfills that role for Kathy after her car accident that almost killed her. He is a great companion. Bart says Kathy filled a big hole for him so it is the least he can do in return. (Notice his watchful eye in this picture.)

Now let’s learn some more about Kathy. Her mom was Bev. She was born in Arizona and lived in Southern California during World War II and in San Diego from 1942 to 2020. She was divorced. Bev worked as a nurse for 30 years and retired in 2013. She started as a nurse in the emergency room and later became a head nurse in a nursing home.

Bev loved animals of all kinds. One of her favorite places was spending time at the zoo. Bev was also an avid tennis planner. She introduced Kathy to sports. Bev passed away in 2021 at the age of 88. Kathy has a sister, Peggy, who lives in Flagstaff, Arizona. She is married to Bart (the human). She has one son, Jason, who is a purchasing manager for the University of Arizona in Tucson. The love of animals worked its way through the family since Jason used to work at a zoo.

Kathy left Los Angeles and went to San Diego in 1972. She attended the University of California Riverside where she graduated in 1985 with a B.A. in History. She went on for a master’s degree at Arizona State, completing her M.A. in History in 1987. She worked for three years before she went back for her Ph.D. in History at UC Riverside in 1994. She was an adjunct professor at various universities for a few years. She became a visiting lecturer for one year in Minnesota State University - Mankato and then spent three years at San Diego State University. She went back to Mankato as an Assistant Professor in US History. In 2010 she became a full Professor.

In 2019, Kathy retired and came to New Mexico. In 2020 Bev joined her here. Kathy chose New Mexico because she could afford a house here and she would be closer to family. In addition, she recalled spending two weeks here when she was in high school and Peggy participated in a horse show. She liked the weather. Unfortunately, when Bev passed away it cut short the time they had to spend together.

Earlier I mentioned Kathy’s love of sports. She played field hockey in high school and softball all through college. She was on local teams and also traveling clubs.

I asked Kathy to tell us more about the life of a professor for those of us who are not familiar with it. To advance within the system one had to show progress in five areas every year – teaching effectiveness, research productivity, service contributions, professional development, and mentorship. When she became a full professor, she didn’t have to demonstrate the five areas of growth. Kathy said professors were required to spend 12 hours a week in the classroom. I know it doesn’t sound like much, but it adds up with preparation time. Keeping material fresh and interesting is an important part of being a good teacher. There were a lot of meetings (something Kathy no longer likes – and probably didn’t then). The remainder of the time was with office hours talking to students who came to meet with her. Kathy taught freshman through graduate students.

Her main focus remained on US History. The demographics in Mankato was mostly white, and either Catholic or Lutheran. A lot of the freshman were first generation college students. It was difficult for many freshman to adjust to college life since the families expected their child to return home on weekends to help out or work there. This made it hard to adjust to life away from home, meet other students and study. The parents didn’t understand the adjustment that was needed.

While in Mankato, Kathy attended an ELCA Lutheran church. When she went “church hunting”

Kathy and Bart continued from page 6

and came to Cross of Hope she was greeted by Ruth Hinkel. Observing Pastor Adam, she wasn't sure he was "for real." Could he "really have so much energy and be polite to everyone?" She had to observe him for a while before she knew it was for real. The people were also nice. So, the decision was made.

Now Kathy (along with Cheri Sorensen) help with outreach. "The best way to do good is to do good to the outside world." Kathy and Cheri organize blood drives, the food drives (for both humans and animals), clothes drives, Special Olympics, ramp projects. If you want to help out, let Kathy know. Kathy also served on the church council.

Kathy is an intelligent, fun person to know with a quick sense of humor who is very compassionate. Take a moment to introduce yourself if you don't know her. The bonus will be meeting Bart. Don't forget, rub his back!

Nurse's Corner

By Mary Hughes



Another epidemic?

In 2023 the Surgeon General sounded the alarm to warn people about an epidemic of loneliness in our country. He stated that "isolation and loneliness are a critical public health problem and that millions of Americans lack adequate social connection. Recent surveys found that almost half of all adults report experiencing loneliness, especially among young adults."

Loneliness is linked to a greater risk of heart disease, dementia, stroke, depression, and premature death. In fact, it can be compared to smoking 15 cigarettes a day!

You can experience loneliness in different ways. It's not just about being alone. It can be a longing for connection or feeling like you don't fit in. Or perhaps craving a spiritual connection to find a deeper meaning to life. Our brains are wired to seek out others.

Many of us at Cross of Hope are able to make these connections within our community. But some may find it hard to reach out. Volunteering to help others can be just as beneficial for you as it is for those you help. Check out some of the opportunities like building ramps or blood donations. The Albuquerque city website has lots of volunteer activities as well.

Physical activity, a healthy diet, sufficient sleep, and meditation or prayer assist in focusing on a positive attitude and keep us healthy.

Loneliness is not a disease or a character flaw. It is a signal for action if you or a loved one need help, please reach out to someone here or talk to a healthcare provider.



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

Extraordinary Ordinary Faith

Drop in all summer at 9:15am for small group - before or after worship - to dive deeper into the texts for the day and connect with others in faith!

To join a small group, email RC Jordan at media@crossofhope.org

Banner Babes

by Sherrie Simek

The Banner Babes held a sewing workshop to work on Comfort Care Quilts, our newest ministry. Wendy Harrison, loves her new comfort quilt!

We enjoyed fellowship, although we were spread out across the Great hall! With dedication and love, four quilt tops were fashioned in our design studio and sewed by several individuals. We are holding our next sewing workshop on August 4. Those of you anticipating the tea, our menu has been taste tested and approved. Oh no! No secrets revealed here. You'll have to come taste for yourself on the first Saturday in November at our annual tea. Details forthcoming.



Wendy Harrison with her comfort quilt from the Banner Babes

Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch on
Wednesday, August 13 at 1pm
We will gather together at

Sobremesa Restaurant and Brewery
3421 Coors Blvd NW, 87120

RSVP to Florence Begay
At 505-363-5827 or email
florencebegay2011@gmail.com by August 11



Special Needs VBS



Photo courtesy of 3MorrPhotos



Photo courtesy of 3MorrPhotos



Photo courtesy of 3MorrPhotos



Photo courtesy of Lauren Kovarik



Photo courtesy of 3MorrPhotos



Photo courtesy of 3MorrPhotos



Photo courtesy of Lauren Kovarik



Photo courtesy of Lauren Kovarik

Special thanks once again to Patty Westerfield, our phenomenal volunteers. Kudos to Keri, Cody and Nick for the great music and dance moves. We could not do this ministry without the wonderful preparation of art projects done by Wendy Harrison.



Heart Strings

Krystyn St-Martin	2
Saylor Torres	4
John Lacher	7
Debra Gonzales	8
Forrest Uppendahl	17
Geoff Bokan	18
Kathy Smith	18
Bonny Arseneau	18
Ignacia Wickert	19
Fran Hveem	20
Toni Kovarik	23
Ruth Hinkel	23
Dolores Hughes	25
Isaac Williams	25
Jeanette McNealy	28
Cecilia Pepper	29
Rudy Simek	31

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

August

	Day	Years
Leof and Susan Strand	3	57
Don and Beth Cresinger	4	62
Janet and Wayne Conlon	7	49
Jason and Laurie Adams	8	27
Steve and Staci Spinks	17	34
Todd and Kathy Bramley	19	36
Gary and Fran Hveem	20	64
Dennis and Linda Milks	24	51

**We are deeply saddened to announce the death
 of our sibling in Christ,
Gem Harris,
 who died on July 20, 2025.**



**Please hold Bill and one another
 in your prayers and care.**

**Information on a Memorial Service
 is still to come.**

Rest eternal grant her, O Lord; and let light perpetual shine upon her.

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



**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.

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



**Rainbow Trail
 Lutheran
 Camp**



Boden and Isaac
 loved Rainbow
 Trail and gathering
 as a community
 with campers and
 leaders.



**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:

Outdoor service Sunday - 8:45 a.m.

Worship in Sanctuary and Streamed online Sunday - 10:00 a.m.

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

August Book Suggestions

by Dee Gutierrez

The Seven Storey Mountain: an autobiography of Faith- Thomas Merton

The Seven Storey Mountain is the 1948 autobiography of Thomas Merton, an American Trappist monk and priest who was a noted author in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s

Between Two Worlds: a Memoir of a life interrupted - Suleika Jaouad

A deeply moving memoir of illness and recovery that traces one young woman's journey from diagnosis to remission to re-entry into "normal" life.

He Leadeth Me: an extraordinary Testament of Faith - Walter J . Ciszek, S.J.

Captured by the Russian army during World War II and convicted of being a "Vatican spy", American Jesuit Father Walter J. Ciszek spent some 23 agonizing years in Soviet prisons and the labor camps of Siberia. He here recalls how it was only through an utter reliance on God's will that he managed to endure.