



Love • Transform • Serve

# RAYS of HOPE JOURNAL

June 2026, Volume 44, Issue 6

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.

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*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13*

## Remember and Give Thanks

Our ancestors who discerned God's call to gather as a faith community under the identity of Cross of Hope Lutheran Church gave us the gift of grounding our identity, being, and journey in the good news of hope. The hope of Christ that is the saving grace of God and the hope of the cross of Christ that redeems all creation. It holds our identity as beloved children of God. It grounds our being as the Body of Christ that bears God's grace in the world. It makes sure our future as we journey in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. May always marks another year of the journey as Cross of Hope Lutheran Church, and it marks another academic year as well in the life of our School Ministry. I have also come to look forward to blessing the High School graduates in the month of transition that May is for so many. The same is true for our life together and so it is important to take a minute to remember and give thanks for the time we have shared together and for the hope in which we abound into the future.

Elaine Pratt and Ann Martin have ended long tenures on our teaching staff, and we are forever grateful for the years of faithful dedication to so many students, families, and colleagues. God's grace has indeed abounded through their ministries through Cross of Hope and we celebrate with them the joy of blessed memories and the hope of the next season of the journey. Hold them in prayer as we give thanks for their ministry!

We are also filled with gratitude for some of our part-time staff that are ending their no less impactful ministry through Cross of Hope. Join me in thanking and holding in prayer Lisa White, David Becker and Debra Gonzalez!

Camp @ Cross of Hope blesses our Wednesday evenings together throughout the year, and we'll gather again in September without Cody Broyles and Laura Benchik in their super volunteer roles. Join me in prayers of thanks for their servant hearts and all who volunteer their time through Cross of Hope!

Linda Willoughby has served as your Church Administrator for the last 31 years and is now looking forward to retirement and the next season of her journey. Her last day will be January 29, 2027 which gives us a nice time to remember and give thanks for the journey that we share. Thank you for joining me in prayer for so many blessings and so much hope!

Peace,  
Pr. Adam

**Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School**  
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 Albuquerque, NM 87120  
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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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Contributors:	The Nurse's Corner Monthly Book Suggestions
Reporter and Writer:	Mary Bresnahan
Photographers:	Lynne Bagby RC Jordan Greg and Nancy Morrison Margie Reed
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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 continues.**

School continued on page 3

**Care Outreach**

**Transportation**

Medical Appointments  
 Other Appointments  
 Necessary Errands



**Emergency Meals**

Family Emergency  
 Illness  
 Death

**Assistance is available:**

- [www.crossofhope.org/forms](http://www.crossofhope.org/forms)
- Email: [care@crossofhope.org](mailto:care@crossofhope.org)
- In the Great hall
- Call COH office (505)897-0047x102



Love • Transform • Serve

School continued from page 2

Dear Families and Cross of Hope Community,

As we wrapped up our school year, we gathered as a community to celebrate some important events.

We promoted eleven fifth grade students off to middle school. This ceremony was filled with laughter, tears, and beautiful reflections by Ms. Joy and her students through their "I Am" poems. Sherrie Simek helped distribute a personalized bible to each student, reminding them to fill their minds, hearts, and lips with God's word.

We held an evening "Moving Up" ceremony for our 4 year old preschool students. The sanctuary was filled with family members, teachers, and friends, as well as flowers, balloons, gifts, and Kleenex. Ms. Lori and Ms. Rhonda led the students in song, and honored our students with certificates.

Finally, we ended the school year with a Family Fun day. We celebrated a fantastic school year with bouncy houses, a giant slip n slide, Kona Ice treats, a grilled hot dog lunch, and face painting. Laughter and smiles filled the air!

Thank you for all of the generous support this loving congregation has provided to us all year. It has been such a privilege to be part of this amazing church and school community.

Susan Rivera  
 Director of School Ministry

Trisha McClain  
 Director of Preschool Ministry



“Moving Up” celebration for our Preschool Students



Families and Community celebrate fifth grade promotion at the last chapel of the school year.



More school on page 4

# Council Corner

By Laura Burton

*“A man prayed and at first he thought that prayer was talking. But he became more and more quiet until in the end, he realized that prayer is listening” Soren Kierkegaard.*

Our council meetings follow a prayer-focused framework asking God to guide our work in serving Him and the community. The meeting began with a review of the community users of the building to ensure that our community efforts aligned with the Rocky Mountain Synod’s guidance and calling for the Church making the facilities available for community groups.

The meeting continued with a discussion and review of the school’s marketing plans and outcomes. We also discussed anticipated staffing changes in the school.

The council is pleased to share that with the solar panel project completion, our first PNM bill was “zero” ! We want to recognize Bob Arseneau for his tireless and diligent work on the solar project. We are already reaping the benefits of his efforts.

The meeting continued with discussion of the beginning of budget planning. As you know, a council member is available in between services to greet and to hear any questions or concerns. Finally, with summer upon us, the service times have changed with the early service gathering outside. Know that your council will still be available between services to connect and listen. Find ways this summer to pause and soak in the beauty of God’s creation.

Oh, what a fun ending to a great school year! Kids loved their all day science and Family Fun Day.





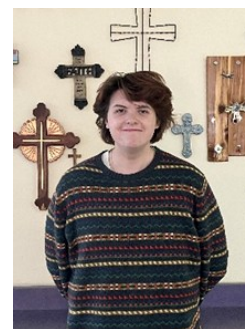
## Graduation has Arrived

It is time to celebrate our 2026 graduates

By Mary Bresnahan

**Ethan McClain** is graduating from Cottonwood Classical. He will be receiving an International Baccalaureate. In practical terms he will be able to skip about year's worth of classes.

Ethan started his education journey at Cross of Hope, following in his sister, Kaley's, footsteps. His mom, Trisha, was the kindergarten teacher and is now the Director of Preschool Ministry. (Both of his parents are part of the Praise Team.)



Ethan plans to attend Albion College, a small liberal arts college in Albion, MI. His major will be psychology, with a focus on counseling and cognitive brain therapy. You, like me, might wonder what brought him to this decision. Ethan explained that he has ADD and depression. He wants to work with those in an emergency room setting or in prison who have no one who will listen to them. Basically he wants to help people in crisis. He has received therapy himself and understands the feeling of being pushed aside. He wants to provide the opportunity for people in these situations to talk about their feelings.

Since Albion provides the opportunity to get hands-on experience, Ethan thought this would be the perfect place to learn, not just theory but get real-life experiences (one of the college's specialties). Ethan is starting with a good foundation and will be a great success as he pursues his goal. His quilt from Banner Babes will come in handy during the cold winters in Michigan!

Good luck, Ethan.



**Mia Maldonado** is a recent graduate from Explora Academy. She was a student at Cross of Hope from kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

Her college plans are not firm as she is still waiting to hear back from the University of Colorado – Boulder. Her other choice is University of New Mexico.

What she does know is she plans on receiving a bachelor's degree in psychology and then go on to Law school. She knows both colleges have good law schools. Her final goal is to practice Criminal Law.

During high school Mia participated in 'Competitive Mock Trials'. Being in the college prep program (where the classes are shorter & more intense) she was afforded the opportunity to take classes in an area of interest in her junior and senior years. She found those pertaining to law interesting.

Mia was the VP of the National Honor Society for three years and participated in the school newspaper for two years. In addition, she has been involved in dance with an independent group for many years and works at Sadie's. This young lady has certainly learned time management!

Graduates continued from page 5

I'm sure she will be focused as she applies what she learns and hopefully will have the opportunity to get hands-on experience. She will do well. Good luck Mia and remember you have a whole community cheering for you.



**Elise Hielkema** is a graduate from Explora Academy. She attended Cross of Hope from kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. (Many of you may remember that her dad, Richard, was our Director of Music for years).

Elise will attend New Mexico State University and major in Criminal Justice with a focus on Forensic Science. She plans to have a double major in Biology.

Explora Academy has what Elise described as 'mini-majors' which gives students the opportunity to explore various occupational fields. This provides the opportunity learn about different professions. Elise has been taking forensic classes the last three years.

The favorite thing about high school for Elise was the friends she made, especially after her siblings moved out of the house. She will miss her friends since none of them are going to New Mexico State.

Elise has been working at Bobo Tea Company. This gives her spending money. Her college education will be paid for through the Lottery Scholarship as long as she maintains a 3.6 GPA. The Praise Team has been part of Elise's involvement at Cross of Hope. She will continue to participate when she is home from school.

If you see Ellise at the second service, or in between, give her a thumbs up for a job well done and wishes for a successful college experience. Go Elise!

**Alex (Alejandro) Abeyta** has just graduated from eCADEMY High School. The school is mostly online and has a trade education program. It affords students the opportunity of attending CNM at the same time. The trades they focus on are carpentry, automotive, electrician and welding. Alex fell in love with welding.



Alex is currently preparing for 'hands-on' testing with "412 District for Pipe Welding" (welding union). About 100 people apply for this apprenticeship and twelve people are selected.

Alex became interested in welding from his grandpa who worked at the Los Alamos Labs. This year Alex was a runner up in the "Skills USA" competition. Initially there were three competitors chosen to advance from the state possibly on to the national and then international competition. The group running this initially chose three winners. Then they dropped it down to the top two competitors. Alex was number three. (How disappointing.)

Initially I wondered what Alex's odds were of winning the '412' testing for the apprenticeship. They

Graduates continued on page 7

Graduates continued from page 6

are pretty good when you consider his placement in the 'Skills USA' competition! Additionally, Alex explained he was much younger than most of the applicants (17 years old vs. 20 year-olds).

Alex hopes to work on an oil rig in the ocean doing primarily 'tig' and 'stick' welding. I would guess there will be some learning of underwater welding too. This kind of job entails six months on the rig and six months on shore (not working). He knows Fifo Co hires for these positions.

If for some reason he does not end up as one of the twelve applicants chosen for the '412' apprenticeship he will go to CNM for an associates degree and then compete for the 'Skills USA' at the college level.

Sounds like Alex has covered all his bases. No matter what challenges are thrown Alex's way, it appears he is ready to meet them and move forward.

Alex has been involved with the youth group and attending Cross of Hope since 2020 when his mother joined the church.

Congratulations Alex on your accomplishments and best wishes for your future successes!





**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*

**Point - Counterpoint**

“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.” Romans 10:8

Dialogue happens between at least two people. Dialogue is done in relationship to one another and is filled with points and counterpoints. Wisdom comes when you can hold both point and counterpoint in tension and learn what it has to teach you, or reveal to you. In faith, what is revealed, or learned, is the good news of God! Whether the presence of both law and gospel in scripture or the starkly different theologies held together in both Romans and Matthew, there is always good news to receive and proclaim!

This summer we will explore the good news of God through the point - counterpoint of the books of Romans and Matthew in a faithful way that does not set up the duality of 'good-bad' but rather holds the tension of the present good news of God to lift us up on the journey. Grab a friend. Come and worship. Explore together in small group on Sunday's at 9:30am as we learn and grow together in life and faith.

**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)*



**The Church office will be closed  
June 19.**

**Summer Worship Schedule**

Our Summer Worship began May 24, 2026, and will continue through Labor Day, September 6.

8:30am Service will be outside on the lawn.

9:30am Fellowship

*Come inside for coffee and conversation and goodies*

10:30am Service will be in the Sanctuary.



**July 26 to Aug. 1  
More information soon!**

**Thank you always for your much needed support!!**



## Heart Strings

*Members of COH unable to worship with us on a regular basis.*

*Please contact these Church members and let them know we care and are praying for them..*

**Gary and Fran Hveem**  
884 Evening Primrose Lane  
Bernalillo, NM 87004

**Joanny Wilson**  
10008 Ashland St NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87114

**Charlie and Gini Murphy**  
548 Eastlake Dr.  
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

**David and Diane Pressel**  
543 Whisper Pointe St SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87121

**CAMP @ COH**

**Resumes in September**

**Wednesdays 5:30pm - 7:30pm**





	Day
Kaley McClain	3
Patty Westerfield	4
Kellie Webb	6
Rick Alpers	8
Violet Adams	10
Wendy Harrison	11
Russ Sorensen	13
Ron Wirths	13
Jonathan McClain	15
Melanie Kouri	15
Gretchen Comfort	18
Alex Abeyta	19
Laurie Weiss	20
Patrice Leddy	26
Nancy Lacher	27
Jerry Burton	27
Kate Ropp	28
Tom Ropp	28



Graduation quilts and graduates pose with Banner Babes as they celebrate their recent accomplishments, and get ready for a new chapter in their lives. (photo courtesy of 3Morr Photos)



	Day	Years
Gregory and Nancy Morrison	6	45
Karen and Alan Schwartz	10	59
Pat and Laura Benchik	14	46
Alex Cortinas and Loyola Garcia-Cortinas	17	9
Jeff and Michele Moser	19	33
John and Nancy Lacher	20	45
William and Lois Casto	25	32
Adam and Laura Berndt	25	16
Philip Wangberg and Pat Holman	28	54

*I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers  
Ephesians 1: 16*

The American Society of Radiologic Technologist gave thanks for the years of dedicated service of Greg Morrison by naming their building tower in his honor. Pr. Adam was honored to share this blessing for Greg by attending a luncheon at the naming ceremony in February. Ask him about the museum!

(Left picture courtesy of Pr. Adam)



**The Morrison Tower**

## Community Outreach



Because of you,  
life doesn't stop

**BLOOD  
DRIVE**

Sunday, June 7  
10:00am to 1:30pm  
Nursery



vitalant.

**To make a lifesaving appointment,  
please scan the QR code.**

Bring your telescope  
if you have one!  
The crescent moon,  
Jupiter, Venus, and  
other star systems  
will be viewed.



**COH's annual Star Party -  
Astronomy Night at Mariposa Park  
Friday, June 19 at 8:30pm**



## *The Happy Hoper Beth Locke*



*By Mary Bresnahan*

<b>Birthdate:</b> July 3, 1954	<b>Birthplace:</b> Houston, TX
<b>Marital status:</b> Divorced	
<b>Children:</b> Four (3 in Albuquerque, 1 in Houston)	<b>Grandchildren:</b> 6 boys & 1 girl
<b>Occupation:</b> Speech & Language Pathologist	
<b>Hobbies:</b> Folk & Irish step dancing, Scottish Country dancing, ballroom & Latin dancing, hiking/walking, travel, genealogy, quilting	

Beth’s parents were Leland and Lois Jean Stevens. Her dad was a CPA and had his own business for 35 years. He had previously worked for families, including descendants, of the founders of the famous King Ranch. Beth’s mother was a professional pianist, playing in several groups. (Beth sits close to Amy during church so she can appreciate her piano playing. It gives her fond memories of her mother’s piano playing at church.) Many in her family were professional musicians.

Beth has two brothers and one sister. They all live in Texas. Interestingly, her siblings do not come to New Mexico to visit, but her Canadian side of the family come frequently. That causes one to wonder how Beth got here. Beth, and her family, came to visit once and as the saying goes, she was “enchanted.” She wanted to move here – and so they did in 1988! Once Beth was settled here, her parents came to visit every year. Her father loved New Mexico’s nature and night skies, even setting his watch to see the moon rise over the Sandias.

Beth attended Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. She earned a B.S. in Speech and a M.S. in Audiology, which included a wide range of topics including the culture of families with deafness, sign language, ways to communicate with people who are deaf. She taught children with deafness in Texas, but when she moved here, she worked as a Speech Language Pathologist working with students diagnosed with articulation disorders, language disorders, learning disabilities, autism, severe multiple disabilities and emotional disabilities. Beth worked for Albuquerque schools for 30 years. She retired in 2024. She said she loved her work and returns on special holidays, like St. Patrick’s Day, to interface with the kids in costume and speaking with a brogue.

In 1994, Beth earned an M.S. in Counseling from Webster University. She developed a program using ‘positive’ words and emotions. This helped her students diagnosed with emotional disabilities express what they were feeling. She was able to integrate this into her language therapy sessions. This added skill was extremely helpful for both her and her students. As I think about this further, this is a skill that can be helpful for anyone and especially those with special needs. It would be like icing on the cake.

Happy Hoper continued from page from 12

After Beth moved to Albuquerque, she stayed at home raising her children. After her divorce, she got her job with APS.

Through APS, Beth met Rosemary Neely and Jan Parris. It was Jan who influenced her to come to Cross of Hope in 1998. Beth attended for many years before she became an official member of the church.

And, interestingly enough, Beth and David Wilson are fifth cousins!  
Beth is an active member singing in the church choir and working with Banner **Babes**.



Scan to Register



# SPECIAL NEEDS

## Vacation Bible School

July 20 – July 24, 2026

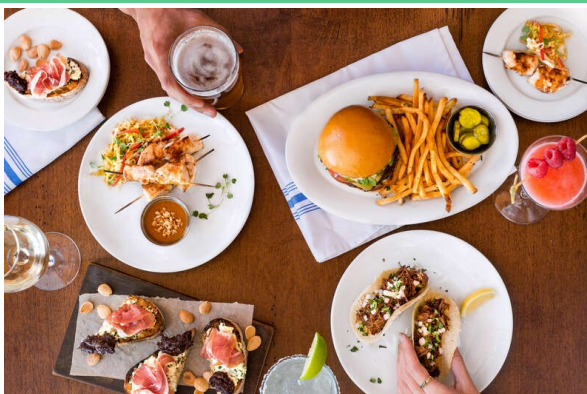
9am – 11:30 am

Cross of Hope Church

6104 Taylor Ranch Rd NW

Information: 505-250-5186

## Lunch Bunch



### Jinja Bar and Grill

June 10, 2026 at 12:30pm

5400 Sevilla Ave NW 87120

Please RSVP to Florence Begay 505-363-5827 or email [florencebegay2011@gmail.com](mailto:florencebegay2011@gmail.com)



**Cross of Hope Church**  
**6104 Taylor Ranch Road, 87120**

505-897-0047, x102  
 office@crossofhope.org  
 www.crossofhope.org



**at Cross Of Hope**

**No Fee!**  
**Non-Church Members & Friends Welcome!**

**ACTIVITIES  
 INCLUDE**

- Outdoor Play
- Music
- Bible Studies
- Snacks
- Games
- Crafts
- Fellowship
- Special Events



**JUNE  
 8-12**



**SCAN ME**

**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**



**Valley Consulting Group**  
 7620 Jefferson St NE, Ste 3  
 Albuquerque, NM 87109  
 505-271-0065  
 valleyconsultinggroup@thrivent.com

27193C R5-25

**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.



Taylor  
 Ranch  
 Neighborhood  
 Association  
 TRNA.ORG

**Flea Market  
 & Craft Fair**

**Saturday, June 6, 8am - 2pm**

Cross of Hope Church Parking Lot  
 6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW

Let's Celebrate

**Ron Barth**

Cross of Hope's first and foremost pastor has a birthday celebration in June. The family is asking for cards or stories be sent by June 12 to:

Kim Stiff

103 Hopetown Rd  
 Carolina Beach, NC 28428



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



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



6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW  
 Albuquerque, NM 87120-2639

psdirector@crossofhope.org

Preschool (505) 899-0928



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

Facebook Page: Cross of Hope Church

#### Onsite Worship Times:

Sunday - 8:30 a.m.  
Sunday 10:30 a.m.

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

# June Book Suggestions

by Dee Gutierrez

## The Power and the Glory- Graham Greene

In a poor, remote section of Southern Mexico, the paramilitary group, the Red Shirts have taken control. God has been outlawed, and the priests have been systematically hunted down and killed. Now, the last priest is on the run.

## Theo of Golden by Allen Levi

One Spring morning, a stranger arrives in the small southern city of Golden. No one knows from where he has come, or why. His name is Theo and he asks a lot more questions than he answers! Theo visits the local coffeehouse, where ninety-two pencil portraits hang on the walls; portraits of the people of Golden done by a local artist. He begins purchasing them, one at a time, and putting them back in the hands of their rightful owners. With each exchange, a story is told, a friendship born, and a life altered. This is a story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen. Theo Of Golden is a beautifully crafted novel with a hint of faith and of one person's example of love and unending kindness. *(I received this suggested June book from Toni Kovarik.)*