



# RAYS OF HOPE JOURNAL

July 2026, Volume 44, Issue 7

Love • Transform • Serve

## 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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*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.*  
1 Thessalonians 5:11

## Building One Another Up: Church, School and Community United in Christ



One of God's greatest gifts is the opportunity to grow together in faith. As a Church and school family, we are blessed to be surrounded by people who encourage us, challenge us, and remind us of God's love each day. Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 5:11 call us to make encouragement a way of life - not just within the walls of our church or classrooms, but throughout our entire community.

Our Church serves as the spiritual heart of our ministry, offering worship, prayer, and opportunities for discipleship. Our school nurtures young minds while helping students grow in wisdom, character and faith. Together, they create an environment where children and adults alike learn what it means to love God and love one another.

At Cross of Hope, our mission to show and share God's love extends far beyond our walls. We reach out to our larger community - Rainbow Trail Lutheran Day Camp, Camp@COH, Special Needs Bible School, Family Promise of Albuquerque, New Mexico Ramp Project, Rio Grande Food Bank, Boy Scout Troop 126, Cub Scout Pack 12, Girl Scouts blood drives, as well as clothes, socks, and coat drives. Whew! These partnerships remind us that we are stronger together than we could ever be alone.

When the church, the school, and the community work together with Christ at the center, something beautiful happens. Children are surrounded by consistent examples of "Fruits of the Spirit" - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23) United in Christ, we become a living testimony of God's grace.

Rays of Hope Editor,  
Lynne Bagby

### Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School

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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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Council President

## School News

**Open Enrollment for  
Cross of Hope School continues.**

**EXCELLENCE BEGINS HERE**  
**ADMISSIONS**  
*Open for*  
**2026/2027**

**EXTRAS**

- Excellence in Christian Education
- Small Class Sizes
- Family-like Community
- Weekly Specialty Classes

**Limited Slots Available**  
**APPLY NOW**  
[crossofhopeschool.org](http://crossofhopeschool.org)

**Cross of Hope SCHOOL**

## 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.

## Care Outreach

**Transportation**  
Medical Appointments  
Other Appointments



**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)897-0047



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## Day Camp 2026

As the Coordinator Handbook for Day Camp explains:

“Rainbow Trail Lutheran Day Camp is a unique partnership designed to provide congregations with a vibrant and faith formative program that nurtures relationships between the adults and children within the church. It provides an outreach opportunity in the local community.

RTLCL counselors lead energetic worships, games, singing, as well as lead and provide guidance in Bible study and arts and crafts. Volunteers from the church work with RTLCL staff in these areas and take the opportunity to participate and play alongside the kids. This dynamic and flexible partnership allows for learning and relationships in RTLCL staff have departed.”

This day camp model is our inspiration for Camp@CoH each Wednesday night.

This year our camp theme was Hands Wide Open based on Philippians 4:6-7.

Last month our campers arrived on Monday morning, June 8 eager to go, and we welcomed over 65 kids each day aged 5 - 12. Many of the parents reported that this day camp is one of the highlights of their child's summer.

I saw it in their faces each morning as they walked inside our doors. As the saying goes, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Enjoy looking at some of the photos of the smiling faces enjoying each other's company, learning about Jesus' love, and sharing it with one another.

Live well, laugh often, love much,  
Nancy Lacher





# Council Corner

Your COH Council members continue to work diligently on the closing of this fiscal year as we prepare for our 2026-27 fiscal year beginning August 2026. We begin the budget preparation process in July with a current budget review of 2025-2026 and begin budget planning for the new fiscal year 2026-2027. The new budget will be presented at the COH Assembly during our Annual Congregational Meeting for approval. We ask for prayers of guidance as we move through this budget process to do God's work for COH Church and School.

Budget issues include:

- research and feasibility for an After School Program
- equipment replacement and maintenance (printers) vs rental with maintenance included
- property needs

COH will spend the summer recruiting new preschool and elementary teachers as we prepare for the new school year. Active enrollment for our schools continues through the summer.

Linda Willoughby, COH Church administrator has officially submitted her retirement notification (after 31 years of service) effective January 2027. As the new fiscal year approaches, we will be putting into place an effective transfer of duties and training plan for her replacement.

Please remember your COH Council members are available between services for any questions you may have. We continue to serve COH Church and School on your behalf and thank you for your trust, prayers, and support.

Respectfully submitted by Ron Cordova



The Church office will be closed on July 3 for July 4!



# Property Update

Lilies, lilies, lilies everywhere! Are they not gorgeous? I hope you have been able to take the time to see them blooming in the garden by the playground, the circle garden out front, and the tree well near Kachina Street. Our property group works diligently outside to keep the grounds at Cross of Hope beautiful and appealing. Weeds are always looking for a home to spread their roots and thorny appendages. Summer brings the routine of mowing grass, pulling weeds, and checking and rechecking water sources.

The month of June had more changes. Check out the preschool office remodel that was completed. We had a great group of helpers relocating furniture and boxes to the teachers' rooms and our preschool director's new office.

Annual floor maintenance was done the last two weeks of June. We are pleased with the results.

A special shout out and thank you to Anthony Soto. He is our go-to man for all things in need of repair.

Another great shout out to Margie Reed for the thorough cleaning of our kitchen.

Enjoy the pictures of our work on page 10 and come join us at anytime to be part of the property team. We work both outside and inside. See Margie Reed, Sherrie and Rudy Simek, John Lacher, and Pat Benchik for ways to keep our campus pristine!

By Sherrie Simek



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

This summer we are exploring 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.

## 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.*

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).

## Family Promise of Albuquerque (FPA) Hosting July 26 - August 1

As time for our hosting draws near, you will be hearing from Jan and Glenna with details for dinner policies, food preferences, allergies and ages of children and family members. Sign up tables with specific needs will be in the alcove on Sunday July 12 and July 19 between services. Remember, we accept groceries, household supplies, gift cards for meals, purchasing groceries and specific gift cards for gas.

Our July hosting will most likely be our last at the parsonage house located at Montgomery Church of Christ (MCC), 7201 Montgomery NE A "ready move in date" for Family Promise's new address, 315 Tennessee NW, is projected to be in August. This new property will have an office for Family Promise staff. There will also be a space for a day care center, an area for counseling, learning life skills, cooking and large gatherings.

Help to make this move will be requested for the long-awaited move. Michael, the director, has not shared specific opportunities to assist with painting or other household needs.

Please pray for these families as they work toward securing jobs and housing. Successful independent living is their goal and we have the opportunity to offer a hand up.

For I was hungry and you fed me. Thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you took me in. When you do for the least of these, you are doing for Me. (This is paraphrased from Matthew 25:35-40.)

We are thankful for your prayers and willingness to help,  
Glenna Meneely and  
Jan Anderson 505 362 3663



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



|                  |    |
|------------------|----|
| Diane Carrico    | 1  |
| Marjorie Pool    | 1  |
| Beth Locke       | 3  |
| Mary Hughes      | 6  |
| Cecilia Lawrence | 7  |
| Liz Sanchez      | 8  |
| Jackie Taylor    | 9  |
| Isabel Wickert   | 9  |
| Jane Anderson    | 10 |
| Mia Maldonado    | 10 |
| Duane Meneely    | 14 |
| Erika Miller     | 15 |
| Leilani Streff   | 21 |
| John Romisher    | 21 |
| Steven Weiss     | 26 |
| Abigail Edwards  | 26 |
| Stacey Taylor    | 26 |
| Deborah Rivera   | 29 |
| Draco Wormwood   | 30 |
| Stephanie Webb   | 31 |



We are deeply saddened to announce  
the death of our sibling in Christ,  
**David Pressel.**



**A Memorial service  
will be held at COH on  
July 10<sup>th</sup> at 11:00am.**

**Please hold Diane with family and friends,  
in your prayers and care.**

*Rest eternal grant him; O Lord; and let light perpetual shine upon him.*



|                              | Day | Years |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|
| Brant and Kristyn St-Martin  | 23  | 10    |
| Michael and Dee Gutierrez    | 25  | 37    |
| Louise Hawley and Bob Grogan | 25  | 15    |
| Steven and Laurie Weiss      | 26  | 23    |
| Russ and Cheri Sorensen      | 29  | 54    |

# Lunch Bunch



July 8, 2026

12:30

Olive Garden

10500 Coors Blvd Bypass NW  
(the one by Cottonwood Mall)

Please RSVP to Florence Begay 505-363-  
5827 or email

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

# 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

Diane Pressel  
543 Whisper Pointe St SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87121



# Happy Hope-r Tony Girard

By Mary Bresnahan



**Birthdate:** October 29, 1952  
**Birthplace:** St. Paul, MN  
**Married:** Widower - Valerie  
**Children:** Alyssa and Alexis; 4 grandchildren  
**Occupation:** Certified Orthotist  
**Hobbies:** Two dogs - Poe, a papillon and Feebie, a Yorkshire terrier, build mussel loader guns, and help daughters when needed

Tony's parents were Allen and Shirley. Shirley was a beautician and Allen a printer. The latter became vice president of the Printing company. Tony had one brother (deceased) and has one sister. His sister is a retired nurse and lives in Minnesota. She was his mother's caregiver. Tony's mother passed away in February of this year.

Tony enlisted in the Air Force in 1970. He learned to maintain fighter planes, particularly a KC135, and a tanker he compared to a flying 707 gas station. He was stationed in upper Michigan and then Thailand for six months in 1972. He returned to upper Michigan for three years.

While still in the Air Force, in 1973, Tony had a bad motorcycle accident. He had numerous surgeries on his right leg and plenty of rehab. During this time, he was trying to decide what to do as far as an occupation was concerned. In high school he wanted to be a cowboy or a pilot.

He did get to fly with his crew in the Air Force and later with the hospital crew when they visited various clinics around the state for orthoses fittings.

Due to his accident, he started his path toward orthotics which entails making and fitting orthotic devices for body support, including 'halos' which screw into the head to hold the head and neck (over the C1, C2, C3 vertebrae) in place.

When Tony got out of the Air Force in 1974, he returned to Minnesota and went to the University of Minnesota receiving an A.S. degree in orthotics. Tony married his first wife in 1974 and was divorced in 1983.

Tony found his way to Texas for a job. There he met Valerie Jean who was an Occupational Therapist. They were both working in a big hospital (Scott & White). They got married in April 1985. Their first baby arrived in Sept. 1986 and Tony received a job offer in Albuquerque. They moved in November 1986. Valerie got a job with Educational Assessment Systems Inc (EASI) in early childhood education. She was assigned to work at Chaparral School as a School Therapist (working with all the special needs children). In 1997 APS got their own therapist and Valerie then worked in Bernalillo and then at Santo Domingo Pueblo. Eventually she left the school systems and joined Tony at Carrie Tingley Hospital.

Tony was at Carrie Tingley Hospital as Manager of Orthotics and Prosthetics. Later Carrie Tingley became known as UNMH/Carrie Tingley. Tony told me about some incredible orthotics he made, especially one for a preemie baby that was a half body brace to help contain his unstable thoracic spine and extended around his head. The baby still needed to have room to suckle. All the medical care worked, and the child grew and flourished. Tony also worked at UNM Hospital (one day a week) with adult patients with trauma, ortho and neurosurgery.

Valerie passed away in 2019. Tony volunteered at UNM through COVID working with COVID patients. He covered for staff one day a week and on weekends. Tony retired from UNMH/Carrie Tingley in 2021.

Valerie and Tony were among the early members at Cross of Hope. Valerie was the lead volunteer as far as church attendance and volunteering was concerned. She was very active. She was involved with starting the Special Needs Bible Camp with Patty Westerfield. Tony said in the early days he helped with the sound system.

Tony is a very interesting and kind person. He can certainly tell you stories about the wonderful things he did in his professional life. He attends the first service. Seek him out and engage him in an interesting conversation.



Pictures from our property update

Dear Kind and Gentle Readers,

This issue of Rays of Hope was done using new cloud-based software. I am in the midst of a great learning curve. Please be patient as we move into a changed format.

Lynne Bagby,  
Rays of Hope Editor



**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**  
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 Albuquerque, NM 87109  
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[valleyconsultinggroup@thrivent.com](mailto:valleyconsultinggroup@thrivent.com)

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**Cross of Hope Church and School**  
**Congregational Council Team**  
[cohcouncil@crossofhope.org](mailto:cohcouncil@crossofhope.org)

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

**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](mailto:esdirector@crossofhope.org)  
 School (505) 897-1832




More pictures from Rainbow Trail Lutheran Day Camp

**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](mailto: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](http://www.crossofhope.org/forms)
- Email: [care@crossofhope.org](mailto:care@crossofhope.org)
- 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 in Christ's love through worship, education and outreach to develop and strengthen relationships with God.

Rev. 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.

# July Book Suggestions

By Dee Gutierrez

#### **Becoming More Than A Good Bible Study Girl - Lysa Terkeurst**

How do you step out of the drudgery of religious duty to experience a living, moment-by-moment, deeply intimate relationship with God?

#### **Believe - Ross Douthat**

Do you ever wish you had more faith? Here is a blueprint for thinking your way from doubt to belief.