CROSS OF HOPE Church & School

Love • Transform • Serve

RAYS OF HOPE JOURNAL

September 2026, Volume 44, Issue 9

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.

"Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."
(Acts 2: 46-47)

Life Grounded in Worship

September holds many transitions. Summer ends and Fall begins and with it the change in weather (please!). Most school and program years are now beginning if they haven't already. Football begins again as baseball winds down. At Cross of Hope, our Sunday worship life moves back inside with the **Lutheran liturgy at 8:30am, a time for fellowship and faith formation at 9:30am, and a contemporary liturgy at 10:30am (note the time).**

We come to the meal of Holy Communion by grace to experience the grace of God in Christ's body and blood. For good practical reasons, we've used wafers and intinction (the method of receiving Christ's body and blood by dipping the wafer into the wine) during our summer months. We will continue this practice for the fall until returning to baked bread and cups of wine in Advent. Calling all bread bakers! If you would like to learn how to bake our communion bread, we'll be hosting a bread baking training party this fall as we build a rotation of bakers. Sign up with RC Jordan during Meet COH.

On September 13 , we'll be invited to 'Meet COH' during the time of fellowship and faith formation at 9:30am. During this time you will be able to engage one another in fellowship and conversation and explore the ministries of Cross of Hope. Where is God calling you to serve and participate?

On September 6, we'll observe a new feast day, Creation in Christ! Creation in Christ celebrates the ongoing creation of the world in and through Christ, who sustains, unites, and holds all created things. We hear today of the triune God who creates all things: sun and moon, shining stars, sea monsters, creeping things and flying birds—and, yes, even human beings. God-in-Christ still takes care of all things and invites us to join in as caretakers of God's good creation. The lectionary texts for the day are provided by the ecumenical group, Consultation on Common Texts (CCT), and this new feast day is supported by the Lutheran World Federation and World Council of Churches.

Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School
6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120
Phone: (505) 897-0047
E-mail: office@crossofhope.org
Web: 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 Editors: Lynne Bagby
RC Jordan

Editorial Staff: Lynne Bagby
Mary Bresnahan
Beth Cretsinger
Margie Reed
Linda Willoughby

Contributors: The Nurse's Corner
Monthly Book
Suggestions

Reporter and Writer: Mary Bresnahan

Photographers: Lynne Bagby
RC Jordan
Greg and Nancy Morrison

Council Communication: Sherrie Simek
Council 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.

School News

Open Enrollment for Cross of Hope School continues.



Check out the school site for exciting events: Crossofhopeschool.org

Care Outreach

Transportation
Medical Appointments
Other Appointments

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)897-0047

CROSS OF HOPE Church & School
Love • Transform • Serve

School News

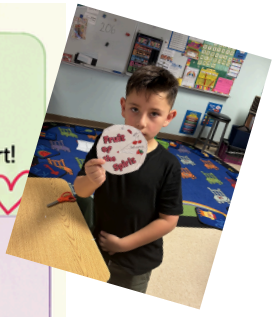
""I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

He has made EVERYTHING BEAUTIFUL IN ITS TIME.

(ECC 3:11)

This week during our Roadrunner Rally we learned how Jesus is the strong stem (the vine) and that we can ask him for help when we need to be strong. This is how we **bear much fruit!**

Can you believe we are rounding out our first month of school? It has been a beautiful start!



For the month of **SEPTEMBER,** we will focus on the fruit of **SELF-CONTROL.**

I love our community! Here is what is happening in September!

THANK YOU, TAYLOR RANCH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION!

They blessed us with 10% of the profits they made at their summer yard sale!

This is what community is all about.

MEET COH!

Are you looking for a church community and want to know more about the ministries offered at Cross of Hope Lutheran Church?

Please join us on **SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13TH** to "Meet COH" at 9:30 and stay for worship at 10:30.



BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

Box Tops is another easy way to bless our school community. Please scan the QR code!

MARK THE DATE!

CAMP @COH

September 2 is our kick-off for Camp@CoH this year!

We certainly hope to see all our returning campers as well as some new ones, I hope! We will be kicking off the year with kicking-style games, a burger cookout, some ice breakers during Bible Study time and our first campfire worship.

Join us for our kick-off, Sept 2 or any Wednesday afterwards. We meet each Wednesday from **5:30-7:30pm.**

Please register using the link below to sign up for camp this year.
https://www.crossofhope.org/register-for-campcoh/

We are looking forward to lots of fun, fellowship, faith formation and of course, yummy food. I can't wait to see you all again.

If you want to donate food, please use this link:
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094EA9AC29A6FCCF8-61616485-welcome

STUDENT LED CHAPEL

will begin next week from 2:45-3:15.
Parents are always welcome to join us for worship.
The chapel schedule for the month is:

4th/5th	will lead	9/2
3rd/4th	will lead	9/9
1st	will lead	9/16
Kindergarten	will lead	9/23



SAVE THE DATE!

FIELD DAY!

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH
9:00-12:00
Mark our calendars and plan to join in the fun!

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW!

School continued on page 4

School continued from page 3

"*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."* Galatians 5:22–23

From my Heart to Yours

Happy September! Preschool News

We are excited to welcome a new month filled with learning, growing, and discovering God's wonderful creation together! Throughout September, our Bible lessons will focus on Creation and the amazing world God made. From the beauty of nature to the animals, plants, and people around us, we will help our students see that God made the world and everything in it! Our Bible verse for the month comes from Acts 17:24: *"God made the world and everything in it."*

Students will begin chapel with Pastor Adam this month, and will have a visit from Ms. Keri near the end of September. Please be invited to our September 16th or 17th chapel service at 9:35am in the Sanctuary. Our Fruit of the Spirit focus for September is self-control. Through stories, classroom activities, and everyday experiences, we will help children practice stopping, thinking, making good choices, and using gentle words and actions. These are important skills that help our little ones grow in their relationships with God and with others September is sure to be a month full of curiosity, wonder, and joyful learning! Thank you for partnering with us as we nurture your children's hearts, minds, and faith. We are so thankful for each of our Cross of Hope families and the opportunity to watch your children grow each day. Here's to a wonderful September! We can't wait to see all that God has in store for us this month!

Trisha McClain
Director of Preschool Ministry

Life Grounded in Worship continued from page 1

Speaking of the wider church, back in April I wrote here about the provisional recommendation of the CCT in moving the Easter readings from the Acts of the Apostles to an appropriate time later in the year. That time is now here, and as Cross of Hope continues to be a faithful partner on the journey of faith with the wider church and our neighbors of all faiths, our Epistle reading beginning on September 20 will be from Acts. Be invited and encouraged to join a Making Faith Connections small group and engage these texts in prayer and reflection this fall.

It is a blessing to serve this community of faith!

On behalf of the Worship Team,

R. Adam Berndt, Pastor

Council Corner

By Jessica Williams

At the August 18 meeting the church council received a school report from Trisha McClain, Preschool Director, giving updated enrollment numbers of 45 elementary and 31 preschool students. She also told us about recruitment efforts over the summer; she did 20 tours in July and 13 of those enrolled!

Sherrie Simek's President's report included estimates by Baca's Trees for trimming three cottonwoods and one ash tree.

Sherrie also reported that Just Sprinklers provided an estimate for repairs to the sprinkler stations that have not been working most of the summer. (Rudy Simek has been watering this section by hand all summer! Thank you, Rudy!).

The application for the solar rebate was submitted and the check is expected in the first part of 2027.

Pastor Adam's report included topics of Worship Life together. This included a discussion of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day service schedules and camp cookouts added to Camp@COH this year.

Your church council is a body that is committed to working together efficiently in the service of our Church and Jesus. We are so thankful for this community! To God be the glory!

Property Update

By Sherrie Simek

Can you help me give a BIG SHOUT OUT to the Scouts who partner with COH? On August 15, a large group of Scouts and leaders, came together to help Rudy clean and weed, what we affectionately call "THE BIG DITCH", the wasteland between our parking lot and the fire department. It had gotten out of hand, some of the weeds were thigh high! One can see by the pictures, there aren't weeds, or trash or apples left! Thank you!

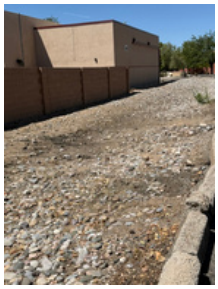
It's that time of year where we all begin cutting down flowers that bloomed all summer, cleaning out flower pots and gardens.

We had a huge repair job done on our sprinkler system specific to the grass and two large gardens. Station one had ceased to function correctly in May and totally quit working later in June. It was determined the valve system needed replacing and a back flow manifold system needed to be added. The work has been completed.

Baca's Trees will be tree trimming on the three cottonwoods in the grass area and the ash tree in the big garden on September 15.

The first couple weeks of school saw small handyman odd-end jobs complete, bulletins boards moved, a projector screen installed, and tables repaired.

Come see our group on September 13 at "Meet COH"! We'd love to talk with you about property needs, inside and outside.









SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Shirley McCan	1
Thomas Hielkema	4
David Kovarik	5
Mike Walter	5
Anthony Soto	5
John McWilliam	6
Sherrie Simek	6
Margaret Benham	7
Bennet Berndt	8
LIsa Fields	11
Bill Harris	11
Bob Arseneau	13
Jacob Kouri	13
Gary Hveem	18
Staci Spinks	19
Khloe St-Martin	20
Julia Ann Hawkins	22
Mary Bresnahan	22
Charles Murphy	24
Roy Pederson	24
Mike Ropp	26
Nicole Bencomo	28
Rich Neely	29
Kevin Kouri	29





SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

	Day	Years Married
Rudy and Sherrie Simek	3	49
Geoff and Debbie Bokan	13	51
Robert and Sherrie Phillips	14	41
Tim and Linda George	18	45

Meet COH

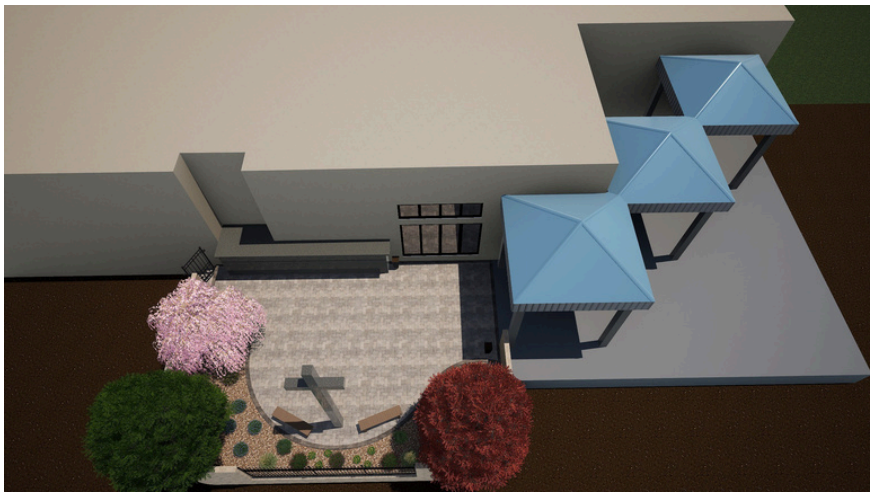
What is Meet COH? It's a special time to connect, discover, and find your place in the life of our church!

Join us on September 13 at 9:30am in the Great Hall, between worship services, and meet the people and ministries that make Cross of Hope feel like home.

Stop by, start a conversation, explore opportunities to serve and grow, and see how you can be part of what God is doing in our congregation.

Come Curious. Come Connect. Come Meet COH!

Columbarium/Prayer Garden at Cross of Hope



What cemeteries are to coffins, columbariums are to urns which hold the cremains of a loved one. In past centuries churches had cemeteries. But nowadays more people are cremated with the cremains placed in urns. Some churches consequently now have columbariums which house these cremains, allowing loved ones who have passed on to be located right on church grounds for easy visitation access by relatives.

It is customary for columbariums to be contained in prayer gardens, which provide a beautiful, meditative and inspirational environment for visitation. A team here at Cross of Hope is exploring this for our own facility. One possibility explored is a 30' by 39' by 40' walled garden/columbarium to be placed at the cross, on the west side of our campus. Because the cross is a central symbol of our faith, great care has been taken to ensure that the cross is totally visible and totally accessible. It will be well lit, especially at night, and there will be some embellishment by lovely small trees and flowering plants nearby.

A project like this will require an initial investment. The beauty of this pursuit long term is that it will pay for itself as the church will charge for niches and urn placement. The ultimate decision for this to proceed will be made by the congregation. There are a number of churches which have successfully constructed and maintained columbarium prayer gardens over many decades. Some of these churches have been visited by members of the team. If you would like to know more about this, feel free to contact any of the committee members, Duane Meneely, Pat Benchik, Pete Wormood, Charlie Anderson, and Pastor Rick Alpers.

Lunch Bunch



September 9
12:30pm

La Reforma Taquiria and Brewery
8900 San Mateo, Suite 1

Please RSVP: Florence Begay 505-363-5827
email 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

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

Joanny Wilson
10008 Ashland St NW
Albuquerque, NM 87114

Diane Pressel
543 Whisper Pointe St SW
Albuquerque, NM 87121





The Happy Hope-r

Liz Sanchez



By Mary Bresnahan

Birthdate: July 8, 1959	**Birthplace:** Albuquerque, NM
Marital status: Divorced	
Children: 2 -Jeremiah & Matthew	**Grandchildren:** 6: Alexis, 22; Michell, 21; Alyssa, 19; Mackenzie, 15; Macie, 12; & one great grandchild, Sophia
Occupation: Security Police at Sandia Labs	
Hobbies: Traveling, cooking, baking, watching sports (especially football & soccer)	

Liz's parents were Regino and Viola. Regino's parents were born in San Luis Porta Sea, Mexico and migrated to the United States. Regino was born in Madrid N.M. His father worked in the coal mines there. The family finally left the 'company town' when they had enough of the 'company' rules.

Viola was born in Alameda (now considered part of Albuquerque). Her parents were originally from Spain.

Liz describes her dad as "a character". Regino held several different jobs: construction, a business taking food to the pueblos and a custodian. He told stories and rhymes all the time. Things that would make you laugh!

Viola always worked, usually part-time, while raising six children. Her main job was as a waitress. Liz was the youngest, eight years younger than her brother, Nickie. When Liz started school, Viola started working full-time in a school cafeteria. She was the baker. She ended up at West Mesa High School and became the cafeteria manager. She retired from there.

Out of the six children, three are deceased and three are still alive.

Liz was always athletic. She was a softball player while in school. Her team went to many tournaments. She was also an avid bowler. Liz said she, and her husband, got involved in karate when her son, Jeremiah, was about eight. Now Liz does water aerobics (which has helped her a lot through her knee replacement surgeries). It is admirable to see how Liz pushes herself during her recouperation period. What a trooper!

Liz shared that she always wanted to be PE (physical education) teacher. Some of the courses she needed to complete for her bachelor's degree were not related to PE so she decided to quit school and seek another career. Liz says she believes you are always where God wants you to be. "It all worked out well."

Liz continued on page 10

Liz continued from page 9

Her bigger desire was to be a wife and mother. Unfortunately, both of her marriages did not last. However, she is close to her sons and their families.

Liz spent 30 years as a Security Police Officer at Sandia Labs. She explained how she would have to go and check the bunkers every hour during the night. Unlike many police officer, overall the job was pretty safe. Liz always worked the night shift which made it difficult to participate in some daytime activities. At Cross of Hope, she pushed herself to help during Vacation Bible School.

When Matt was of age, Liz found the pre-school at Cross of Hope. The church was warm and welcoming, including Pr. Dale. It filled the spot in her heart which had been empty after her divorce.

Now that Liz is retired, she is very active with the hospitality ministry and the CARE team. She maintains the inventory in the kitchen which both church and school use for various events.

Liz is such a joy and a wonderful addition to our church community. If you happen to see her, thank her for all her work behind the scenes. I don't know what we would do without her!

Making FAITH Connections
FRIENDS ✦ FAITH ✦ EVERYDAY LIFE

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

Grab a friend. Come and worship. Explore together in small group on Sundays at 9:30am Fellowship Hour as we learn and grow together in life and faith.

The worship materials will be in your Sunday Bulletins.

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.

Camp@CrossofHope



Camp@CrossofHope resumes on September 2. We are ready for a new year of games, food, Bible study and s'mores around the campfire.
5:30pm - 7:30pm

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 87120-6065
valleyconsultinggroup@thrivent.com

27931C RS:2

Cross of Hope Church and School Congregational Council Team
cohcouncil@crossohope.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, NM87120-6039

esdirector@crossofhope.org

School (505) 897-1832





Outdoor fun. It's great to be back to school!

Trisha McClain, Director of Preschool Ministry

Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School

6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW
Albuquerque, NM87120-6039

psdirector@crossofhope.org

Preschool (505) 899-0928

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27
10:00 AM TO 1:00 PM
NURSERY

Because of you, life doesn't stop.

BLOOD DRIVE

To make an appointment, please scan the QR code, call or text Vitalant at 505-226-6802

vitalant

CROSS OF HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL
6104 Taylor Ranch Road NW
Albuqurque, NM 87120

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Mission Statement

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Rev. Adam Berndt, Pastor
505-897-0047 ● office@crossofhope.org
www.crossofhope.org

FaceBook Page: Cross of Hope Church

Onsite Worship Times:
Sunday - 8:30 am
Fellowship Hour - 9:30 am
Sunday - 10:30 am

September Book Suggestions

By Dee Gutierrez

Remain in the Vine by Dominique Okonkwo

This is book has 70 devotions and scriptures to guide one in a walk with God. It is a study of each Fruit of the Spirit. The Women on Wednesday will be using this as a part of their time in Bible study, prayer, and service throughout the school calendar year they follow.

Recommended by Lynne Bagby