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Easter Ex Nihilo: Something Out of Nothing

We are coming to the great holy-day of Easter, which centers on the extravagant claim that God raised Jesus from the dead. It is both one of the most inspiring beliefs of Christianity, but also one of the most challenging to believe. Because we are not used to seeing something (life) come out of nothing (death).

When I was in seminary, one of the fancy Latin phrases we were taught was the term- *ex nihilo*- which roughly translates, *out of nothing*. In Christian teaching, this term mostly connects to the idea that in the beginning God created everything out of nothing- and yet was not himself created. Naturally, this claim does not go unnoticed by deep thinkers, because the idea of eternity is rather puzzling.

Indeed, most years I teach confirmation, someone inevitably asks- *Who created God?* And so we wrestle with the idea of eternity. But *wrestle* is the correct word because eternity is not a very straightforward concept. In fact, I don't think any human mind can fully grasp or prove it. And it all leads us to that same big question philosophers have been asking for thousands of years- *Can something come out of nothing?*



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Holy Week at Community of Joy Church

Maundy Thursday Service—April 6th at 7:00PM

Good Friday Pilgrimage to El Sanctuario de Chimayo—April 7th at 7:00AM

Good Friday Tenebrae & Prayer Around the Cross — April 7th 7:00PM

Easter Sunday—April 9, 2023

- ◆ Easter Sunrise service - 6:30AM
- ◆ Easter Potluck breakfast at 9:00AM followed by an Easter Egg hunt!
- ◆ Easter Celebration Service—10:00AM

People Page

April Birthdays

10th: Pat Shodean	22nd: Joshua Rodriguez
Myra Williams	25th: Joan Bouty
11th: Stephanie Schick	27th: Stephen Felty
12th: Millie Lyman	28th: Deborah Williams
14th: Charles Davis	29th: Ben Schick
Jake Maser	30th: Peg Tool
15th: Karen Lenoski	



Charlotte Griffith
 Donna Doles
 Dick & Peg Tool
 Connie White (Stephanie's mom)
 Joan Bouty, Louise Scott
 Barbara Shotwell & Warren Sullivan
 Charles & Suzanne Davis
 Steve Gamrath
 Paul & Jackie Anderson
 Michael Wallace (3/5)
 Stefanie McKee (3/12)
 Eloise Spradley (3/12)
 David Brown (3/12)
 The Gran family (3/12)
 Geneva Ellis (3/12)
 Sandy Rubio (3/12)
 Sandra Candelaria (3/12)
 Mary Halverson (3/19)
 Cathy Potabi (3/19)
 David Phillips (3/19)
 Family of Andy Anderson (3/19)
 Gayle Phillips (3/19)
 Monika & Jasmine Brown (3/19)
 Marla Chrisman (3/26)
 Rhomberg family (3/26)
 Lori Brown (3/27)

If you know of a person or a situation that you would like included in our prayer list, please email them to Earlene (earlene@communityofjoy.com).

COMMUNITY OF JOY

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www.communityofjoy.com

Pastor:

Pr. Paul Schick
 pastorpaul@communityofjoy.com

Director of Administration:

Earlene Shroyer earlene@communityofjoy.com

Worship Leader:

Jon Shodean jon@communityofjoy.com

Treasurer: Dick Tool, Greg Quintana

Bookkeeper: Earlene Shroyer

Proofreader: Jean Potabi

Congregation Council

Lee Glauvitz—President
 Chris McGill—Vice President
 Karen Lenoski—Secretary
 Sandy Edwards
 Bill Kostel
 Diane Parham

Ministries Leads

- ✦ **Altar Guild:** Debbie Sciortino
- ✦ **Confirmation:** Pr. Paul Schick
- ✦ **F.E.A.S.T.:** Deborah Williams
- ✦ **Fellowship:** Neal Shotwell
- ✦ **Joyful Hearts Women's Ministry:**
Sandy Edwards
- ✦ **Memorial Committee:** Bill Potabi
- ✦ **Sunday School:** Stephanie Schick
- ✦ **Tech Ministry Leader:** Kristen Sillence
- ✦ **Worship Accompanist:** Keith Jordan
- ✦ **Beer Buddies:** Tony Sciortino

For any reports or information, contact the appropriate person listed above

Holy Week at Community of Joy

Palm Sunday, April 2nd begins Holy Week at Community of Joy. Our service begins outside at the foot of the cross with the Palm Sunday Procession.

Maundy Thursday worship service is at 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday worship service is at 7:00 p.m.



He Is Risen!

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 9, 2022

Easter Sunrise Service - 6:30 a.m.

Easter Celebration Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.

Easter Breakfast Potluck and Easter Egg Hunt—9:00 a.m.

Please bring a dish to share!

Journeying with the Cross on Good Friday

A Tradition of COJ

Our Good Friday (**April 7**) walk to Chimayo is quickly approaching. For those of you who are unfamiliar with this New Mexico tradition, it is an annual pilgrimage that many Christians partake in. El Santuario de Chimayo is said to have special healing powers.

The purpose of our walk is to experience a pilgrimage to a sacred place on the day Christ was crucified. We will take turns helping each other carry the cross (the one hanging on the wall just outside the sanctuary).

The walk is approximately 2 miles each way and is of moderate difficulty. It is uphill on the way to El Santuario and contains some loose dirt areas. Please wear comfortable shoes with good tread and wear weather appropriate clothing.

Pack a lunch to bring with you if you'd like. Here is the schedule:

7:00 a.m.	Meet in COJ parking lot—arrange carpools
7:15 a.m.	Depart from COJ
10:30 a.m.	Park our vehicles and begin our walk
12:30-1:00 p.m.	Depart from Chimayo
3:30-4:00 p.m.	Arrive at COJ parking lot



Announcements



Join Us for an Ecumenical Great Vigil of Easter Service 8 PM on Saturday, April 8th at St. Francis Episcopal Church of Rio Rancho

You are invited to join Pastor Paul and some other local faith leaders and Christians as we celebrate the Great Vigil of Easter with our friends at St. Francis Episcopal Church.

On this Holy Saturday we join with Christians throughout the world to celebrate Christ's Passover from death to life. Join us in this ancient spiritual tradition as we retell the great stories of our faith and gradually welcome in the light to mark out the ending of Lent and the coming of the resurrection!

New Member's Sunday—April 16, 2023

We are once again welcoming in new members!

Following worship we are holding a ***pizza party reception***.

We invite all members to join us for the party and will hold an orientation following the meal.

If you would like to join our church, please let us know!

Men Alive! is going LIVE!

Men Alive! is going LIVE with the Men's Breakfast! We have been meeting via ZOOM for the past two years and are going to join together in person in the Fellowship Hall on **Saturdays, April 8th & 22nd** at **8:30am** for a hearty breakfast, insightful conversation, prayer, and to continue our study of Matthew.

All men, young or old, are welcome to join us. If you have any questions or want to confirm that you will be joining us for breakfast, drop Charlie a note at cwfiedler@gmail.com.

Community of Joy
Beer Buddies



The Next Meeting -
Thursday,
April 20, 2023
at 6:00 p.m.

Worship News

Final Session of the Adult Ed Series

Parables

Christ's Hidden Wisdom & God's Upside Kingdom



Jesus had an important message to share, and yet the primary way he chose to communicate it was through stories called *Parables*. To this day, the brilliance of Jesus' parables inspire and yet also perplex. They speak of what God is doing and yet also invite our participation. They attract us with God's beautiful vision for life and yet also challenge us to embrace a world that is upside down from the one we know.

Join us as we explore Jesus' parables and how they invite us to experience and embrace God's kingdom here and now!

Sunday after worship, around 11 AM



THANK YOU TO OUR MARCH VOLUNTEERS!

Ushers:

Lee & Jill Glauvitz, Chris McGill, Pat Shodean, Dennis & Kris Simpson

Readers:

Ron Bencke, Greg Edwards, Jake Maser, Charlie Fiedler

Communion Assistants:

Diane Brauer, Melissa Eckelbarger, David & Tracy Lizon, Laura Reu, Pat Shodean, Dennis & Kris Simpson

Altar Guild:

Sandy Edwards, Lynette Schurdevin, Pat Shodean, Kris Simpson

Audio/Video Team:

Phillip Reu, Zhong Reu, Diane Brauer, Jim Shotwell

Nursery Attendants:

Michaela Lovell, Ava Rousselle, Olivia Rousselle, Raven Sillence

Counters:

Donna Huxtable, Jean Potabi

Communion Bread Baker:

Paula Thomas

Youth & Children's Ministry

Sunday School

Sunday mornings from 11:05—11:45 p.m.

Children's Sunday School is available for preschool to 6th grade. If you are interested in volunteering, have questions about Sunday School, or to register children to participate, please see **Stephanie Schick**. You can register your children for Sunday school in person, or do so beforehand by picking up a registration form online or at the church.

This Month's FEAST Gathering

Date: April 12th (6-7:30 pm)

Potluck: Theme— *Egg-y Eats (something made with eggs)* Begins at 6 pm

Activity: Trivia Challenge! (6:30-7:30 pm)

High School: At our monthly FEAST gatherings we will have programming for our high schoolers. Some months we will plan a program tailored to this age group, other months we will invite them to join in with our multigenerational activities.

Confirmation: Seventh and eighth graders are invited to participate in confirmation on most Wednesdays 6:30-7:30 pm. If you have a child of confirmation age not currently involved, please contact Pr. Paul about the meeting schedule.

Mark Your Calendar!

Community of Joy Vacation Bible School

June 19-23, 2023



Joyful Hearts Women's Ministry



Joyful Hearts Meeting

Joyful Hearts will be meeting on **Saturday, April 8th** at **10am** in the Fellowship Hall. We will be discussing plans for upcoming projects and events.

All women are welcome to join us! For additional information, you can contact Sandy Edwards, President, at sandraledwards1957@gmail.com

Derby Day Tea Party on May 6th!

On **Saturday, May 6th, from 2-4pm**, Joyful Hearts will kick off our fundraiser for **Haven House**, the only domestic violence shelter in Sandoval County, with a **Derby Day Tea Party**. This event is open to all (women and men)! We will have "Derby delights", tea, a hat contest with prizes in three different categories (Fanciest, Most creative/original, and Wackiest), Derby trivia, and more! A free will offering will be collected and donated to Haven House. Also, if you're interested, the official Kentucky Derby colors are red, black, gold, and white!

Beginning on Mother's Day, we will start collecting specific items (these items will be published in the May newsletter) that Haven House has designated as most needed. This collection will continue until Father's Day, when all the items and monetary donations will be collected and given to Haven House.

Beginning Easter Sunday, there will be a sign-up sheet on the table, so we can get an approximate number of attendees.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at sandraledwards1957@gmail.com



Joyful Hearts collecting toiletries for Albuquerque Healthcare for the Homeless

As you travel this summer, please remember to bring home travel-size personal care items for the hygiene kits distributed by Albuquerque **Healthcare for the Homeless**. Our friend Anita Cordova of ABQHCH reports that the need is great and our donations are much appreciated.

Needed Items:

Shaving supplies
Deodorant (male and female)
Lip balm

Sunscreen
Travel size tissues
Toothbrushes/toothpaste
Band aids



For the hygiene kits, all items need to be smaller size to fit in a gallon Ziplock bag and NO mouthwash, please.

Beyond Our Walls



Storehouse West

We are doing great with our drive-thru donations for Storehouse West. If you would like to donate, simply swing by the outside church entrance and drop off your **non-perishable** food donations in the cart.

- | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| Boxed Cereal (cold) | Canned veggies | Sugar Substitutes |
| Crackers—saltines, club, wheat, any variety | Canned tuna or meat | Coffee |
| Mac & Cheese | Canned fruit | Dog/Cat food |
| Canned tomatoes | Pasta & sauce | |
| Hamburger Helper | Canned pasta | |
| | Sugar | |

Monetary donations for on-going needs can also be made by check to **Storehouse West** and mailed to:
Storehouse West, 1030 F. Veranda Dr. SE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124

125 lbs. of food and 45 lbs. pet food was delivered to Storehouse during the month of March.
Thank you for your donations!
Please continue to support Storehouse West and help feed our community.

Memorials & Gifts—Looking Towards the Future!

At the February Memorials & Gifts committee meeting, a video conferencing system was approved for purchase (along with Council’s approval) this past month to facilitate Zoom meetings. The system allows for multiple camera and meeting participants to be on the screen at the same time. This will especially benefit Council meetings when all members cannot attend in person.

The COJ Gifts & Memorial committee met this past Friday and discussed future projects. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to have handicap accessible door openers on our front entrance? How about acquiring a Defibrillator and have someone trained to use it if needed? Save a life. Repair all the cracks in the parking lot. We can do all this with your donations to the Memorials and Gifts fund.

Would you like to be part of expanding the church’s mission through this fund? Contact the office or speak with a committee member (**Bill Potabi, Kristen Sillence, Pat Shodean, Sandy Edwards**) so that we can connect you with more information about this wonderful ministry.



SERMON ON THE AMOUNTS

Giving for Year through February 28, 2023

Giving	Actual	Budget	Actual Giving
			more/(less) than Budget
Programs:	\$28,022.00	\$30,825.00	(\$2,823.00)
Building:	\$7,260.00	\$8,900.00	(\$1,640.00)
Both Funds:	\$35,262.00	\$39,725.00	(\$4,463.00)

Thank you for your faithful financial stewardship.

Pastor's Ponderings

Easter Ex Nihilo: Something Out of Nothing

Continued from page 1



Usually we would say the more logical and scientific answer is- *No*. Every event has a cause, and was itself caused by some other prior event. This seems to make perfect sense- almost all the time.

For instance, there is a mug on my desk because I put it there, because someone brought it to church, because it was purchased at a store, because a manufacturer made it, because the clay was gathered from the earth, because buried rocks were compressed into clay- *because... because... because...* - all the way back to the first moments of the universe in the Big Bang.

And yet sooner or later the chain of causes breaks down and we end up facing the same problem we faced with an eternal God. *Okay, so there was a Big Bang. So where did the Big Bang come from?*

I was recently listening to a program with the famous scientist and atheist Richard Dawkins. As a staunch atheist, Dawkins usually bristles at the idea of an eternal God who makes the universe out of nothing. And yet when he was asked about the origin of the Big Bang, he had to admit that scientists have no clue how it all came to be. I hear one the newer ideas is that maybe the universe is itself eternal. I guess the concept of eternity is making a comeback!

My point in all of this is that as weird as it is to think that something like the universe could come (ex nihilo) out of nothing- this conclusion is basically inescapable. Something weird happened somehow to put us all on this earth. And people can remove the God from the equation, but they can't remove the strange conclusion that something eternal is at play, and something has seemed to come out of nothing.

And so if you hold onto the strange old beliefs we preach during the Easter season- like the resurrection of Jesus - take heart! Perhaps these strange old doctrines are not as strange as we think!

Moreover, if God can create everything out of nothing, God can raise Jesus from the dead. And if God can raise Jesus from the dead, then you and I don't have to be afraid if we ever face a moment that feels like we have nothing to hope for. God can always create something out of nothing!

A Blessed and Happy Easter to you all!

Pastor Paul

Assisted Listening System

Community of Joy owns a **Peavey Assisted Listening System**. The equipment pulls signal from the audio system and sends it to wireless receivers that individuals can check out to use each service. This will allow people to hear the scripture readings, the sermon and the music.

We currently own four receivers, four sets of ear buds, and headsets. You are welcome to bring your own ear buds or headsets to use with a receiver.

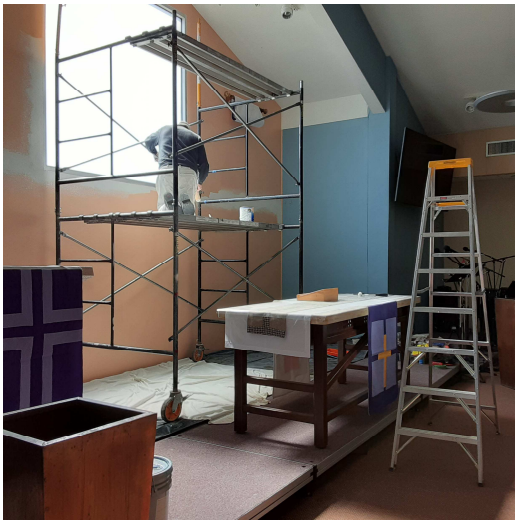


Our Church

Sanctuary Window Project



After **Charlie Shroyer** patched up the wall around the new exterior window, **Lee Glauvitz**, **Dennis Simpson**, and **David Lizon** repainted the altar area.



At the end of the week, **Phil & Jane Watkins**, our stained glass window artists, visited the church in order to take precise measurements of the window space. A big thanks to **Lee and Tom & Liz Ball** for hosting their visit.

A HUGE Thank You to our COJ Council President, **Lee Glauvitz**, for working all through the week on the window project, painting, patching and raising scaffolding.

Our Church

You Can't Thank People Enough

A HUGE THANK YOU to **Dennis Simpson** for repainting the parking lot stripes, and creating 3 large parking places with loading zones.



COJ HIKES to San Ysidro Trials area

Come and join us on **Sunday, April 23** (weather permitting) at **1:00 p.m.** as we lace up our hiking boots and follow Earlene for an afternoon of walking and fellowship.



Our hike will be to the San Ysidro Trials area. The San Ysidro Trials area is a very unique destination where outdoor enthusiasts come to enjoy beautiful scenery and hiking. Stone badland features are widely spread within the area and create distinctive topographies, such as the delicate ecosystems of tinajas. Tinajas are naturally-formed stone bowls that fill with water during the monsoon season and from snow melt. These pools provide an oasis for migratory birds, game species, and many other microorganisms.

We will hike to an area with ancient petroglyphs and pictographs, then we will hike to an area of tinajas. The hike will be about 2 miles, of moderate difficulty over uneven ground (there will be no trail).

Please sign the sign-up sheet if you'd like to go.

Those signed up will receive an email with more information on what to take and what to wear.

Community Connections



www.creativenewmexico.org

A celebration of local art for all ages
April 8 10a-1pm at Star Heights
Recreation Center, 800 Polaris Blvd SE.
Admission is free!

Dozens of
Local artists
of all
disciplines!

hosted by:



Presents



You never know who you might run into in an airport waiting area ...
or what might happen!

Theater Box Office Open Daily starting April 3 at
Pet Food Gone Wild, 2415 Southern Blvd., Rio Rancho
Doggie Day Care, 4035 Peggy Rd., Rio Rancho

Online at www.rr-cc.org/buy-tickets
Or at St. Francis Episcopal Church
One hour before each performance

St. Francis Episcopal Church

2903 Cabezon Blvd. SE, Rio Rancho, NM

Dessert Theatre

Opening Night Special Event: 7:30 PM April 14

7:30 PM April 15, 22, 29

2:00 PM April 16, 23, 29, 30

Tickets: Opening night - \$35

All other Performances: Adults - \$18, Students & Seniors - \$15

Group Rate (6 or more) - \$12 each

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