

The January 2024 Monthly Newsletter of Community of Joy Lutheran Church

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What's Not in the Creed?

My friends, as we approach a New Year and this season of resolutions, let us ponder a big question: *What is the core goal of Christian life?* Well there are lots of directions we could go. Of course, we have to say it has a lot to do with loving and believing in Jesus. And Jesus has a lot to do with practicing love and forgiveness, as Christ did for us in his life and death. So there's lots to say, but it's sort of hard to sum it all up in one single statement.

Luckily, despite the modern obsession with formulating congregational mission statements, churches that are more connected to historic Christian practice (such as our Lutheran tradition) already have an inherited mission statement. We call the Apostles' Creed.

The Apostles' Creed was formulated by early Christians to convey the basics of faith, which it does a fine job at. In fact, a pastor friend of mine once told me the story of showing the Creed to his father-in-law, who belongs to a Christian tradition that has historically rejected the use of Creeds. And to his surprise, when the father-in-law actually read what the Creed says, he could find nothing he disagreed with.

So the Creed is great. Nevertheless, there are some surprising omissions in it. Perhaps the most glaring one is that it skips right from Jesus' birth to his death- and in so doing, potentially sends the false impression that there's nothing important to learn from the way Christ actually lived. This is probably a fair criticism, though perhaps it can be explained in terms of the debates about Christ divinity that were most pressing when the Creed was being formulated.

I believe in God,
the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
He descended into hell;
on the third day
He rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,

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Help Take Down the Christmas Decorations—Wed. Jan 3rd at 10:00 a.m.

People Page

January Birthdays

1st: Judy Huckleby	20th: Laura Reu
2nd: Lucas Kostel	22nd: Dennis Simpson
6th: Laurie Ethier	Hughie Simpson
14th: Matt Edwards	27th: David Lizon
Thanh Reu	30th: Winnie Scrom
19th: Pelly Hutton	

Wedding Anniversaries in January



11th: Charles & Jane Fiedler (24 yrs)
 15th: Sal & Maryann Cano (41 yrs)
 28th: Jake & Terri Maser (4 yrs)

*In Our Thoughts
& Prayers*



**This past
month we
prayed for:**

Donna Doles
 Dick & Peg Tool
 Connie White (Stephanie's
 mom)
 Joan Bouty, Louise Scott
 Warren Sullivan
 Steve Gamrath
 Paul & Jackie Anderson
 Norma Gruber
 Nance Crow
 Bill & Jean Potabi
 Sal & Maryann Cano
 Paul Blott
 Aaron DuBay (12/4)
 Carol Rushing Carr (12/4)
 Rick North (12/4)
 Sheila O'Neill (12/4)
 Margy Barol (12/4)
 Joan Gorman (12/4)
 Sharon Christensen (12/4)
 Sandra Rubio (12/4)
 Pat Buto (12/4)
 Geneva Ellis (12/4)

Eloise Spradley (12/4)
 Gayle & Fred Phillips (12/4)
 Patt Crown (12/7)
 Charles Gilbert (12/10)
 Eric & Jacey Brown (12/10)
 Kelly Strunk (12/17)
 Candace Bouty (12/17)
 Kristen Dorst (12/17)
 Jasmine Brown (12/17)
 Peggy Reed & family (12/17)
 Gina Lee & family (12/17)
 Barbara Saia (12/17)
 Rachel Ortiz (12/17)
 Mary Templeton (12/18)
 Elaine Gauden & family
 (12/20)
 Andrew & Danielle
 Saunders (12/27)
 Larry & Barbara Rousselle
 (12/27)
 Jared Kollbaum (12/27)
 Cindi Hailes & family (12/27)

COMMUNITY OF JOY

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www.communityofjoy.com

Pastor:

Pr. Paul Schick
pastorpaul@communityofjoy.com

Church Administrator:

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
 Greg Quintana—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:** Shaila Shodean
- + **Tech Ministry Leader:** Kristen Sillence
- + **Beer Buddies:** Tony Sciortino

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

Together in Mission

Camino de Vida—Albuquerque
 Iglesia Cristo Rey—El Paso, TX

*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).* 2

Announcements

Pastor Paul and the Church Council
of Community of Joy Lutheran Church
wish you a Happy New Year!
Thank you for your partnership in ministry at COJ.
God has blessed us in 2023,
and we look forward to where God leads us in 2024.



Help Take Down the Christmas Decorations Wednesday, January 3rd at 10:00 a.m.

We need a group to take down the Christmas decorations and return them to their boxes in the storage area. With enough hands, this should not take very much time. Join us beginning at 10:00 a.m.. Wednesday morning, All should be done by noon.

Men Alive!

Men Alive! will be meeting in person on the second and fourth Saturday in January (13th and 27th) at 8:30 am. We will be studying Chapters 18 & 19 of Matthew. As is our custom, we will start with a hearty breakfast and lively discussions.

Please contact Charles Fiedler at cwfiedler@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Beer Buddies

Beer Buddies will resume meetings in the spring.



Our Church

The numbers below are for November. We look forward to sharing year-end totals when they have been counted.

Thank you for your wonderful generosity this year!

SERMON ON THE AMOUNTS

Giving for Year through November 30, 2023

Giving	Actual	Budget	more/(less) than Budget
Programs:	\$185,356.00	\$187,400.00	(\$2,044.00)
Building:	\$49,254.00	\$48,950.00	\$314.00
Both Funds:	\$234,620.00	\$236,350.00	(\$1,730.00)

Thank you for your faithful financial stewardship.

The Fellowship Team is looking for members!



The kitchen at COJ is the heart of many joyous occasions, from Sunday refreshments to holidays, special events, and celebrations of all types.

We need your help. If you have a passions for cooking, serving, meeting new people, or just for lending a helping hand, we invite you to volunteer. Your commitment no matter how big or small will be greatly appreciated.

There is a sign up sheet on the counter outside the kitchen.

Please take a look at it and see if there is an area where you could help the Fellowship Team.

THANK YOU TO OUR DECEMBER VOLUNTEERS!

Ushers:

Dennis & Kris Simpson, Lee & Jill Glauvitz,
Pat Shodean, Meghan Lyman

Readers:

Ron Bencke, Greg Edwards, Lori Brown, Charlie
Fiedler, Josh Welbaum, Karen Lenoski

Communion Assistants:

Pat Shodean, Diane Brauer, Laura Reu,
Dennis & Kris Simpson

Kitchen Angels:

Neal Shotwell, Dianne Hensley, Suzanne Waite

Altar Guild:

Kris Simpson, Pat Shodean, Diane Brauer,
Sandy Edwards, Debbie Sciortino

Communion Bread Baker:

Paula Thomas

Audio/Video Team:

Diane Brauer, Sandy Edwards, Zach Shotwell

Nursery Attendants: Michaela Lovell,

Ava Rousselle

Counters:

Jean Potabi, Donna Huxtable

Our Church

We Welcome our Newest Members!

On Sunday, December 10th we welcomed 4 new households into membership: **Brooke Kerns, Josh Welbaum, Connie Chapman, and Joe Walker.**



*Our newest members (l-r) —
Brooke Kerns, Josh Welbaum, Connie Chapman, and Joe Walker.*

Brooke Kerns:

My husband Henry and I grew up in the Milwaukee, WI area. We met at the University of Wisconsin. We lived in WI until 1990 when we moved to the Denver, CO area. Rio Rancho became our retirement home in April, 2023. One of our sons lives in Denver and the other in Durango with his wife and 3 year old son. I am joining the Community of Joy. Henry will attend occasionally. I love to horseback ride, snow ski, swim and we both hike. I am a retired teacher and will be participating in COJ programs.

Connie Chapman:

I moved to Rio Rancho in 2020, following my 2 sons moving here in 2019 for job opportunities. Three grandchildren help to give me a routine (the youngest spends 2 school nights with me). I'm enjoying the local Senior Center outings to get to know NM better and hope to become more involved with Joyful Hearts. I like to keep my mind active by reading, doing genealogy, and working on crossword and jigsaw puzzles.

**Are You Interested in Joining Community of Joy Church?
Let Pr. Paul or the Office Know!**

Worship News



Thanks to our Praise Team!



Throughout Advent and Christmas our community celebrated the season with beautiful music in the form of Christmas carols, a children's choir, rousing gospel tunes, and an incredible Christmas Eve horn ensemble! A huge thank you to our fantastic music team (and their leader Jon!) for all their hard work and for a wonderful season of church music!

Want to share your musical gifts?

Do you sing or play an instrument, and would you like to get involved with COJ's music ministry? Our praise team is always open to new singers and musicians. Contact Jon Shodean with your interest or come to a rehearsal. Rehearsals are held on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. Join us!



Children & Youth Ministry

Youth/young adults:
meet for a group hike
on Sunday, January 14
right after
Sunday school.



Bring water, a jacket, snacks,
and sturdy shoes. We will
caravan out to the Ojito
Wilderness and hike about
3-4 miles.

The Shodeans will bring
sandwiches.

Sunday School Resumes January 7, 2023

Sunday mornings from 11:05—11:45 p.m.

Sunday school will resume on Sunday, January 7 with two classes—one for pre-k through 4th grade and one for 5th-7th grade.

If you have questions about Sunday School, or to register children to participate, please see **Shaila Shodean**. 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.

Sunday School Teachers Needed!

We are so thankful for the faith we are nurturing through our Sunday School program, however we are in need of more teachers. The good news is that the curriculum is already provided and you do not have to be a parent to help out. If you are wondering if this opportunity might be a good fit for you, please contact **Shaila Shodean** or the office. We would be happy to chat and provide you with training.

January FEAST

Date: January 10th (6-7:30 pm)

Potluck: New Year—New Recipe! (begins at 6 pm)

Activity: "Minute to Win it" games and will be fun for all ages!



**Children's & Youth Chorus
registration opens January 15, 2024**

Register before January 31 for early-bird discount (\$25 off)

We are located in Rio Rancho, but you don't have to be! The Rio Rancho Youth Chorus welcomes middle & high school aged singers of all backgrounds, styles, cultures, orientations, abilities, identities. No previous chorus experience is required – you just need to love to sing! We accept new members twice a year in January/February and again in August/September. Rio Rancho Youth Chorus is Rio Rancho's only community youth chorus. Everyone is welcome!

Joyful Hearts Women's Ministry



**Joyful Hearts will meet on
Saturday, January 13th at 10:00am**

Joyful Hearts News

In December, Colinas del Norte Elementary School used a gift card Joyful Hearts obtained from Thrivent to purchase hams, stuffing, gravy, and canned vegetables. These items were distributed to families via their school food pantry.

Previously, we received a check for school supplies after the school supplies were collected and delivered to Colinas del Norte Elementary School in July. We used that money to donate 8 boxes (160ct each) of Kleenex, and 5 canisters (85ct each) of disinfecting wipes to Colinas del Norte for use when school starts in January.

At the brief meeting on Saturday, December 9th, the following were voted in as 2024 officers: Sandy Edwards, President; Barbara Reeves, Vice-President; Pat Shodean and Paula Thomas, co-Secretaries; and Suzanne Waite, Treasurer. After the meeting, attendees participated in a cookie exchange, and donated several dozen to be used for refreshments on Christmas Eve.

Joyful Hearts collects toiletries for Albuquerque HealthCare for the Homeless

Joyful Hearts collects toiletries for *Albuquerque HealthCare for the Homeless* year round. We have a Collection Bin in the Fellowship Room for your donations. The homeless population is growing and there is always a great need for these items. If you travel, save the hotel *travel size toiletries. They can also be purchased at any store that has a *travel size section in their pharmacy area. Below is a list of needed items. You can go to <https://www.abqhch.org> to learn more about this worthwhile organization. Thank you for your anticipated generosity.



- ◇ **Shaving supplies**
- ◇ **Deodorants (male and female)**
- ◇ **Lip balm**
- ◇ **Sunscreen**
- ◇ **Travel size tissues**
- ◇ **Toothbrushes/toothpaste**
- ◇ **Band-Aids**

*We package these items into hygiene kits and the small size is needed to fit into the gallon Ziplock bag.
No mouthwash please. If you have any questions, please contact Debbie at: dsciortino.rr@gmail.com

Beyond Our Walls



Storehouse West is a food pantry and children's clothes closet that serves individuals and families who are residents of Sandoval County, New Mexico and meet the federal income guidelines for low-moderate income households. **Storehouse West** can supply registered households with an

emergency food package once a month and can assist with Water and Waste Management bills once per year

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

Storehouse West distributed more than 5,000 food packages in 2022, equaling almost 210,000 pounds of food. Community donations are an important part of our supply chain. This month the pantry has a short, but essential list that we need for our monthly food distributions.

PANTRYWISH LIST

PEANUT BUTTER!!!

BREAKFAST CEREAL!!

CANNED FRUIT!!!

RAMEN NOODLES!!!

DRIED BEANS—red, black or white

102 pounds of food was delivered to Storehouse West today—thank you for your donations! **AND 12 children's jackets** were also donated—Storehouse West has been able to provide 216 jackets to kids in need! Please continue to donate!

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



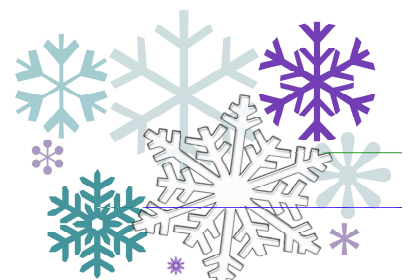
The Storehouse West Kids Clothes Closet would appreciate donations of children's coats. These could be left with the food donations.



Weather Alert!

In the event that the weather in our area turns severe causing worship service to be delayed or cancelled, please check the **COJ website** (<http://www.communityofjoy.com>) **FIRST** for the most current information regarding possible delays or closings.

We will also notify **KOAT TV channel 7** (<http://www.koat.com>) about such cancellations. Their website will also have current information about possible



Pastor's Ponderings

What's Not in the Creed?

Continued from page 1

But the other big omission in the eyes of certain Christians is that the Creed speaks a great deal of heaven (i.e. life everlasting), but completely omits any mention of hell. Why the silence on this big topic?

Some have suggested that this omission proves that early Christians rejected the concept of hell. In truth, this is a vast oversimplification, as some did, some didn't. What is fair to say is that the earliest Christians did not see their faith as a hell-based religion. Rather for them, following Jesus was all about finding heaven. But yet even as I say this, nuance needs to be added, because our modern conception of heaven tends to be largely misguided and un-biblical.

On one level, our misconceptions have to do with the way pop-culture reduces heaven to a rather ridiculous place full of robes, white decor, angel wings, harps, and clouds. If that sounds like a pretty pointless existence to you, don't worry, it does to lots of us. And this imagery is largely un-Scriptural.

On another level, our false impression of heaven has to do with the way we think of it primarily as a place- and a place only accessible to us in the future. In our normal thinking, heaven is beyond earth (maybe up?), and it's totally absent to us until after we die, assuming we are good.

And yet in the gospels, Christ speaks regularly of the kingdom of heaven breaking into our world through his ministry. He later teaches that God is also fully present amidst those who worship in his name or offer hospitality to those in need. Now of course other passages speak of a heaven that is still to come, like when the book of Revelation tells of a final salvation in which heaven and earth become one. But this only goes to show that in Scripture, heaven is not something primarily defined by place or time.



To Jesus, heaven is a state of being, defined by communion with God. And because communion with God can happen anywhere and anytime, it's not limited. It can be experienced to some degree here and now, such as when we give gratitude to God in worship, receive Jesus in communion, or love our neighbor in action. And it will be fully experienced after we die, when our lives will be in total union with God.

The wisdom of the Creed reminds us that the big goal of Christian faith is not escaping eternal punishment- and this is why the Creed omits hell. Rather our goal is all about discovering communion with God. And so as we enter into a New Year, let us make a resolution of this core mission statement of our faith: *We are called to be communion seekers and communion makers, as Christ was before us.*

Wishing you a blessed New Year full of joy and experiences of Holy Communion!

Pastor Paul

**Join Us for Worship in the Sanctuary,
Sundays at 10:00 a.m.**