

Old Church in Corrales to host a collection of créches

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The Festival of the Nativities will feature more than 100 nativities to celebrate the holiday season. (Courtesy of the Corrales Historical Society)

New Mexico is chock-full of holiday traditions.

The Corrales Historical Society began the Festival of the Nativities in 2017, adding to those traditions.

The event is where the society puts more than 100 nativities on display inside the Historic San Ysidro Church in Corrales.

The fifth Festival of the Nativities will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 17, and Sunday, Dec. 18. It is free and open to the public.

“We had to miss one because of the pandemic,” said Susan Cahill, CHS chair and past president. “(The event) started with one of the Corrales Music Society members, who had experienced nativities in a church setting. It was just so different that we wanted to give this as a gift to the community.” Cahill said the support from the local community has helped the event grow.

“The fact that people are involved in supporting different activities within the village is one of the ways this community holds itself together,” Cahill said. “Sharing something like this during a holiday season seems to be a highlight for a lot of people.”



This nativity consists of painted rocks and will be on display at the Festival of the Nativities in Corrales. (Courtesy of the Corrales Historical Society)

Each year, hundreds of people head to San Ysidro to see these interpretations of Christmas.

“This year, almost all of the nativities are coming from members of the Corrales Historical Society, though in past years, they’ve come from the public,” said Debbie Clemente, a member of the church. “I have talked to the folks who are bringing numbers of them, and people who have a couple that are just really special. We have about 50 that were given to us from an estate that we have just here in the church.”

With over 100 nativities, there plenty of pieces that are diverse.

“They are everything from very serious and solemn and gorgeous to whimsical,” Cahill said. “It’s like Snoopy from ‘Peanuts’ has one and some are just adorable little cute things that are just fun.”

Members of the CHS are also making their own special Christmas cookies this year.

“The Old Church is so special to people and it’s such a perfect place to display the nativities,” Clemente said. “I think there’s so much commercialization in Christmas while this is just a lovely way to spend an hour and reflect on the season and have a little hot cider with cookies.”