

## A New Season By Pastor Clare

Well, it's happened again. Time has flown by and we are on the cusp of another season in the life of our church. In just a couple of weeks, we will begin the season of Lent and like any other time of year, it would be easy to continue our fast paced lives and then before we can blink, Holy Week and Easter will be here. Perhaps, there is another way to approach this season that can help us slow our roll and find some quiet time and inner peace. Impossible you say? Sometimes it really feels impossible to slow down, put the anxiety on the shelf, and celebrate the notion of Sabbath.

Sabbath is the idea that we allow ourselves to rest from the chaos of life, from the distractions that keep us from ourselves and subsequently keep us from our Beloved. Keeping the Sabbath isn't about a narcissistic God that demands worship and sacrifice. But it is about our God that desires to be in an intimate relationship with each one of us. Just as any of our relationships require that we are intentional about making time for one another, so does the relationship we have with the Divine.

Of course, we have to ask ourselves whether or not we want that relationship. Do we want one on one time with God? Do we want to allow God to really know our thoughts, our fears, our dark sides, our desires? Often, we run away because we think we can hide when ironically, our entire scripture tells us over and over how we are known, how we are loved, how we are always cherished. So why don't we take or make the time? Perhaps that's the first question we need to ask ourselves. (continued on page 3.)

### The Lenten Season Services

Ash Wednesday Service - March 1 at 6 p.m.  
See page 4 for the Sunday Lenten Series -  
March 4 - April 2  
Palm Sunday—April 9 at 10 a.m.  
Maundy Thursday—April 13 at 6 p.m.  
Easter Sunday—April 16 at 10 a.m.



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#### Special points of interest:

- Adult education 8:30 a.m.
- Sunday morning worship at 10:00 a.m.



### **Core Purpose:**

The Rocky Mountain Conference is a faith community of over 77 UCC congregations in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming who support and nurture one another in local and wider ministry and mission, in the name of Jesus Christ. We are an open and welcoming denomination that proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ, celebrates diversity, honors the gifts of all people and seeks justice and peace for all.

### **Our Core Values:**

- Covenant – While honoring autonomy, we engage in covenantal relationship with the Holy, our neighbors, creation, and ourselves
- Enduring Faith – We express enduring faith in the transformational work of the Spirit
- Continuing Testament
- Extravagant Welcome
- Changing Lives

Check the website often for news and events!

Vista Grande Community UCC is an Open and Affirming Church.

“We, the congregation of Vista Grande Community Church United Church of Christ in Colorado Springs, CO declare ourselves to be Open and Affirming. We strive to be a congregation that includes all persons, embracing differences of sexual orientation, gender and its expression, marital status, family make-up, age, mental and physical health and ability, racial and cultural identity or background, and educational and socio-economic status. We welcome all to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our congregation's life in Christ.

### **Pastor's Hours**

Pastor Clare is in the office on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

The hours are flexible.

If you'd like to meet with Clare, please call her at **719-351-0168**.

### 2016 Steering Committee consists of

Moderator – Erin Elkaim; Assistant Moderator – Jacque Bechthold-Blueitt; Treasurer – Dawn Bechthold-Blueitt; Financial Secretary – John Tinsley; Clerk – Deborah Tinsley; Members-at-Large – Jim Price and Jeannie Harrington

If you are interested in what gets discussed or planned at these meetings, read the minutes which are posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall. Minutes are posted monthly. Also, you'll find the Income/Expense report, too.

### **Our Staff**

Pastor—Rev Clare Twomey

Music Director—David Hudson

Office Administrator—Donna Bristow

Nursery Attendant—Vacant

## A New Season (continued from page 1.)

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It's helpful to have some direction as to how to find the space both physically and spiritually to move into a deeper connection with God. Lent is really a perfect time to stop and return to our Beloved. So let's start with a basic idea/invitation.

Lectio Divina is a contemplative practice which allows us to find that space and time. This practice has been used by mystics since the early church. And I believe we are all mystics...! It is not complicated but it can be a challenge as it asks us to open ourselves to the possibility that the presence of the Divine is truly within us. The idea is not to over think the practice but allow it to envelop us as we set aside time for the most sacred of relationships.

Below is a wonderful explanation of the practice as written by Rev. Jim Burklo of Progressive Christianity.

**Lectio:** *Read a scripture passage aloud and slowly; one of your choice; length doesn't matter though often shorter is more manageable when first starting out. Release any interpretation or opinion you may have about this passage, as you read it.*

**Meditatio:** *Let the passage "sink in" for two minutes. Sit with the passage. Hold it lightly – don't force any attempt to interpret it.*

**Repeat "lectio" and "meditatio" three more times.**

**Oratio:** *Pray aloud: "May I receive from the scripture what my soul needs for today."*

**Contemplatio:** *Get into a comfortable physical position in which you will be unlikely to fall asleep, and for 20 or more minutes, be mindful of your body. What bodily sensations do you experience in the moment? What emotions are associated with these sensations? How do these emotions affect your breathing, as well? Remember: suffering equals pain times resistance. So strive to observe carefully any physical pain you experience, stay open to it, surround it with loving attention, and gently release ideas or opinions about it. Something that can help with this practice is "progressive muscle relaxation". Tighten and then relax your body's muscles, one group of muscles at a time, being mindful of each of the sensations that result. As part of your practice, try "urge surfing". When you feel an urge to do, to take an action, or solve a problem, explore it by paying attention to it. Let the urge be. Delay acting on it long enough to fully experience it. Where and how does the urge manifest in the body? What emotions go with it? What does this urge feel like? Ride it out for a while. See what happens!*

*In mindful Christian prayer, who are you? The observer, or the personality and body consisting of the experiences that were observed?*

I invite you to try this practice during this holy season and if you have any questions, worries, or frustrations, I am available. My wish for you this season is that you experience that deep peace that knows no end, Clare.

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**We're serving the Monday evening meal for Family Promise on March 20.**

**Check out the signup sheet to offer a dish on the menu and/or to serve the meal to the families.**

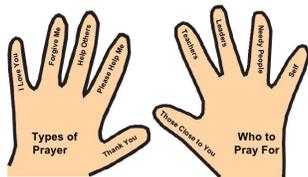
**Location: Central United Methodist Church on Galley Rd.**

**Theology on Tap, the Thursday evening Adult Faith Formation Gathering** is being re-vamped.

Stay tuned for New Location and New Format.

## Worship and Faith Formation

### Hands For Prayer



### Multi-Generational Faith Formation - Lent

On Saturday, Feb. 25, our children and family members are invited to explore the meaning and practice of prayer. Bring your children to Vista Grande on Feb. 25 and explore. Crystal Karr is dreaming up some fun. Begins at 9:30 a.m.

### Sunday Morning Adult Faith Formation

Percolate's new book for 2017 is The First Paul – Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservatory Icon by John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg.



This book reveals Paul's importance, character, and messages. The authors contend that not all books attributed to Paul were actually written by him. Using this understanding, they will discuss the nature and nuanced meanings of his ministry. As usual, the coffee is brewing by about 8:30 on Sunday mornings. All are welcome!

### Worship Services

During the season of Lent this year we will focus on what it mean to be Christian in the 21st century. Richard Rohr O.F.M., founder of Center for Action and Contemplation, offers "When you say you love God, you are saying you love everything". This is quite the declaration and follows the age old mandate to Love God with your whole heart, mind, and soul and your neighbor as yourself. As Christians, our primary example of this is the life of Jesus and, as such, we are asked to dedicate ourselves to his teachings and way of being in this world. During Lent, sermons will focus on Eight Core Principles of Christianity base on Rohr's book of the same title. They are:

1. The teachings of Jesus is our central reference point.
2. We need a contemplative mind in order to do compassionate action.
3. The best criticism of the bad is the practice of the better.  
Oppositional energy only creates more of the same.
4. Practical truth is more likely found at the bottom and the edges than at the top or the center of most groups, institutions, and cultures.
5. We will support true authority, the ability to "author" life in others, regardless of the group.
6. Life is about discovering the right questions more than having the right answers.
7. True religion leads us to an experience of our True self and undermines our false self.
8. We do not think ourselves into a new way of living,  
but we live ourselves into a new way of thinking.

I hope you find this series enlightening, challenging, and reassuring as we move into our vision of Being the Church.

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## Other Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

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### From Fear to Freedom

This six week course will focus on the dynamic of fear as it is experienced by us individually and collectively. We will examine fear from various perspectives - biological, psychological, sociological and spiritual. By learning to understand and face our fears, we will discover our way into freedom and courage.

Dates: Six Sundays from March 5 - April 9th      Time: 12:30-2:00 pm

Location: Vista Grande Community Church

5460 N. Union Blvd., Colorado Springs, CO 80918

Minimum Suggested Donation: \$15.00/class or \$60 for all six classes

**About the instructor:** Ayya Dhammadhira (Sister "D") is an ordained Buddhist nun who is interested in opportunities that develop inquiry and connection amongst folks from various walks of life. She is part of a non-profit organization called Web of Connection whose aim is the integration of spirituality, sustainability and community.

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After Easter, Pastor Clare will offer a course using the UCC Curriculum on White Privilege.

The curriculum and the webinars will lead participants through four areas of focus: telling the story of your spiritual journey through the lens of race; looking at the dynamic of a culture in which whiteness is the established norm; learning how America attaches a cash value to whiteness; and inviting the participants to commit to becoming an ally in the pursuit of racial equity.

"We as the United Church of Christ are a denomination born amidst the Civil Rights era that has not yet realized its promise," said Trimble. "We have the chance to write a new and hopeful chapter in the narrative of race in this country. White people do not want oppression to be our narrative any more than black and brown people want to live in the system of oppression that defines our present age."

John Dorhauer, the UCC General Minister and President, is encouraging every one of the UCC's more than 5,000 congregations to participate. "In partnership with a Holy Spirit who envisions a future in which the United Church of Christ matters, and in response to the UCC still being over ninety percent white almost 25 years into our commitment to be a multi-racial and multi-cultural church, I call all covenant settings to engage in a safe, meaningful, substantive, and bold conversation on privilege."



## The Wider Church

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### Refreshed Purpose, Mission, and Vision of the United Church of Christ

A vision of a just world for all people will guide and shape the future work of the United Church of Christ. It's a vision that the denomination's General Minister and President and unified Board of Directors are prepared to own as part of a refreshed set of Purpose, Mission and Vision statements.

The UCC purpose statement comes from the Gospel of Matthew: ***To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.***

Mission statement: ***United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.***

And the vision: ***United in Christ's love, a just world for all.***



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## Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration 2017

June 8 - 11, 2017

All Ages Welcome

In 2014, we created our radical new vision. In 2015, we planted Mission Seeds around the Conference. In 2016, we Bloomed in the Desert. Now, in 2017, we are excited to use our momentum to Be the Church in the name of justice, fairness, and light. You are invited to join us for Annual Celebration 2017, in Cheyenne, Wyoming! We will discuss, laugh, plan, and worship together as we create the Church of the Future. The event is hosted by the Platte Valley Association.

### "What's with Annual Celebration instead of Annual Meeting?"

The RMC's Annual Event is one of a kind. Every year, we gather to experience real, joyful connections, in addition to conducting the business of our meeting. Is it technically a meeting? Absolutely. It's got agendas and breakout rooms and everything. No one can take that away from it :) But it does something that meetings *don't* do: It brings us closer together as people of the RMC. Simply put, we have fun when we celebrate our Conference, its churches, its people, and its mission.

Our Annual Celebration will take place at Laramie County Community College in **Cheyenne, Wyoming.**

Like last year, full registration is \$350, which covers lodging, all meals, programming, food and drink at our receptions, supplies, planning team meetings, and much more. If you wish to register and stay offsite, you may do so for \$275.

If you register offsite, you must make your own lodging accommodations.

Visit [www.rmucc.org](http://www.rmucc.org) to register

# Membership

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**New members ...** On December 18, we received four new members into the fellowship of Vista Grande.

**Ellen Barry; Rosemary McBride; Melissa Webster and Eduardo Martin, along with their children, Gabriel, Xachary and Eevee.**

## Let's Meet Ellen ...

Ellen states that currently she is in transition of the many aspects of her life.

Her main interests in life are her family (2 grown children and 3 grandchildren); love for horses; art (old master techniques – silver point and 3 color chalk); and volunteer work on the Navajo Reservation.

She is currently retired as a social worker where she worked mostly in a community mental health center. She also worked as a hotline counselor and a rape crisis advocate. During summers, she ran the Visitor Center in Victor, CO.

Ellen met Pastor Clare several years ago. As a member of Vista Grande, she hopes to deepen her relationship with God.

Ellen resides at 71 Paloma Heights, Apt 306, Colorado Springs, 80921.  
[ellenkbarry@gmail.com](mailto:ellenkbarry@gmail.com)

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### Birthdays for Feb and March

#### February



- 11 Sandra Gates
- 16 William James
- 16 Cailyn Pope
- 21 Kyelie (Happy 1st!)
- 27 Lori Gardner

#### March

- 5 Kristi Pfeiffer
- 13 Peyton King
- 17 Amy Gunning

#### Anniversaries:

- Feb 14 Carol and Phil Puterbaugh
- March 20 Dick and Carol Burbank

### *Women's Fellowship*

*Lunch at La Baguette  
French Bistro*

*Saturday March 18 at 11:30 am  
4440 N Chestnut Street.*



### **Cleaning Schedule**

Feb. 4 and 11 – Donna and Dave Bristow

Feb. 18 and 25 – Jackie and Jerry Moore

March 4 and 11 – Carolyn and Lyn Gunning

March 18 and 25 – Carol and Phil Puterbaugh



# February 2017

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<b>Sunday Schedule</b> 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Worship 11:15 am Fellowship			1 9:30 am Prayer Shawl 6:30 pm Choir	2 6 pm Theology on Tap	3	4
5	<b>Sunday Schedule</b> <b>Faith Formation Ministry</b>	6 5 pm Steering Com- mittee Mtg	7 8 am—Men's Breakfast (off site) 6:30 pm Choir	8 8 am—Men's Breakfast (off site) 6:30 pm Choir	9 6 pm Theology on Tap	10	11
12	<b>Sunday Schedule</b> <b>Worship Ministry</b>	13	14 	15 9:30 am Prayer Shawl 6:30 pm Choir	16	17	18
19	<b>Sunday Schedule</b> <b>Facilities Task Force</b>	20 	21	22 6:30 pm Choir	23	24	25 9:30 am Faith Formation MultiGen Activity
26	<b>Sunday Schedule</b> <b>Mission Task Force</b>	27	28				

# March 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sunday Schedule 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Worship 11:15 am Fellowship			1 9:30 am Prayer Shawl 6:00 pm Ash Wed Taize 6:30 pm Choir	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 8 am—Men's Breakfast (off site) 6:30 pm Choir	9	10	11
<b>Sunday Schedule</b> <b>Faith Formation Ministry</b>	5 pm Steering Com- mittee Mtg					
12	13	14	15 9:30 am Prayer Shawl 6:30 pm Choir	16	17	18 11:30 am Women's Fellow- ship (off site)
<b>Sunday Schedule</b> <b>Worship Ministry</b>						
19	20	21	22 6:30 pm Choir	23	24	25
<b>Sunday Schedule</b> <b>Facilities Task Force</b>	5:30 pm Family Promise (off site)					
26	27	28	29 6:30 pm Choir	30	31	
<b>Sunday Schedule</b> <b>Mission Task Force</b>						



## **VISTA GRANDE COMMUNITY CHURCH**

United Church of Christ

Location: 5460 N Union Blvd  
Po Box 26030  
Colorado Springs, CO 80936  
719-599-3057  
[www.vgcc.org](http://www.vgcc.org)

*Pastor Clare Twomey*

### **COME, GROW WITH US**

We are a caring church for thinking people, an inclusive community of faith, united in our common quest to know God, inspired by the spirit of Jesus, and committed to sharing that love in ways that will make a difference in the world.

We are the Open and Affirming (ONA) Church in Northeast Colorado Springs.

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### **MISSION**—Have you checked out our mission tables in Fellowship Hall?

During this year, we'll support the UCC's "5 for 5" missions, which include One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, The Christmas Fund and Our Churches Wider Mission; Family Promise; Los Pobres; Inside/Out Youth Services; One Nation Walking Together; and Cheyenne Village.



The "5 for 5" missions are supported through your monetary support. This is the best way for the United Church of Christ to respond to the needs that each of these ministries request.

**Family Promise** – Vista Grande is a support church for this ministry. Currently, we work with Central United Methodist Church by providing the Monday night meal when CUMC hosts the families in the program. Our next time to serve is Monday March 20. Recently, Erika, Jon, and Donna attended a benefit luncheon for Family Promise. We learned more about this important ministry that houses families in need. Two families who benefitted and have graduated from the program were guests. They shared their stories and thankfulness for the program that helped keep them off the streets. One startling statistic we learned ... there are over 1,000 homeless children in District 11. That's our city! Let's see what we can do to help. Visit the website at [www.ihn-cos.org](http://www.ihn-cos.org)

**Los Pobres** is a non-profit organization meeting the daily survival needs of immigrant workers with low-paying jobs. Faye makes the trip to Los Pobres, which is outside of Pueblo, to bring the items that you donate. Please bring in 5 lb bags of flour, small bottles of cooking oil, bags of dried pinto beans and rice and place them on the Los Pobres table.

In the next newsletter, we'll feature Inside/Out, One Nation Walking Together, and Cheyenne Village.