

It's Here, Spring *By Pastor Clare*

Well, it's here, Spring. I don't know about you but this year Spring's arrival has been very anti-climactic. The weather all winter has been, for the most part, mild and spring-like, allowing us to forgo the hassles of ice and snow and cold, frigid winds. Instead, we've had tepid temps encouraging us to get outside and play. I, myself, have enjoyed playing in our new yard: spreading mulch and gravel, painting fences and putting in a patio. Most of these things I never anticipated accomplishing before May! We've grilled and eaten outside and I've even gotten sun on my Irish skin, allowing me to skip my usual pallor of winter. I should be happy, right? But instead I am nervous. Because the mood for me that undergirds this weather is, "But it shouldn't be like this. There is something very disturbing about this kind of weather." Something isn't ok if we skip a season due to a warming planet. I've been in the Springs since 2000 and never have I seen so many fires before the actual arrival of summer let alone spring. It has me very worried that I should be doing something--when I'm not distracted by the enticing weather that is...

It reminds me of the Lenten and Easter seasons actually. We enter Lent with a sense of reflection during the cold and dark of winter. But it is not uncommon that we drift away to other things, enticed by the everyday minutia that is our lives. Sure, somewhere we are aware that there is something or someone else that needs our attention, but it is so easy to 'forget', or to be distracted, or in denial about what is really going on. We arrive at Holy Week and, like a freakish snow storm, we are tossed back into the reality of the season of Lent. For a brief moment of waving palms and declaring 'Hosannas', we recall Jesus' fateful trip into Jerusalem, and are reminded of what it is we have been ignoring. Just as suddenly, however, we can often by-pass the rest of the Lenten story, remaining in denial about the depth and breadth of Holy Week, thus jumping right into Easter when all is right with the world again.

(Continued on page 3.)

The Lenten Season Services
 Palm Sunday—April 9 at 10 a.m.
 Maundy Thursday—April 13 at 6 p.m.
 Easter Sunday—April 16 at 10 a.m.



Inside this issue:

General Information	2
Page 1. Continued	3
Origins of Easter	4
Faith Formation/Worship	5
Facilities	6
Mission	7
The Wider Church/Membership	8-9

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

It's Here, Spring (continued from page 1.)

We can easily ignore the signs and callings that come with Holy Week, choosing to only immerse ourselves once again, in the balmy comfort of Easter. We can ignore the fires that are burning deep within us, the icy danger that lurks in the world around us, the deeds of injustice, and the cries of those on the margins. We welcome the spring without first embracing and reconciling the harshness of winter. In short, we miss the opportunities for transformation. Transformation of our planet's peril and of our own hearts and souls.

The above metaphor is just a convenience to get you to embrace the entire Lenten story before reaching Easter. We often miss that there is a parallel about our own lives and how we engage the world around us. If we don't allow ourselves to be immersed in the harshness or our winter, can we really appreciate the warmth of our spring without being pestered by the notion that something isn't right? If we deny or run from the truth of our lives, we will probably not see the other areas in our world that need our attention. It is human nature to flee discomfort and seek only happiness and joy. However, we are a people whose God has entered and continues to enter this world with us; sits in the muck with us; cries with us; grieves with us; laughs with us (and maybe sometimes at us); is joyful with us; and goes to the mat for us. And we are a people who have said we will do the same.

Richard Rohr offers, "Resurrected" people prayerfully bear witness against injustice and evil — but also agree compassionately to hold their own complicity in that same evil. It is not over there, it is here. It is our problem, not theirs. The Risen Christ, not accidentally, still carries the wounds in his hands and side."

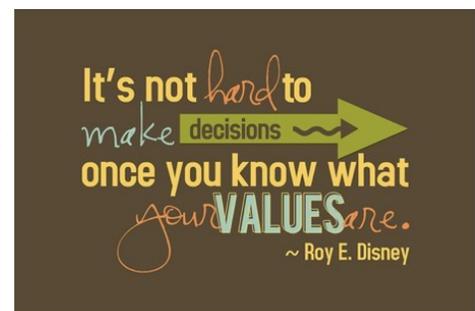
And so, while we enjoy the balmy weather, we must also ask ourselves is something amiss? While we embrace the warmth of Easter, we must ask ourselves what risks were taken, injustices confronted, and lives given to get us here? As we worship a God of all creation and promise to cherish that same creation we must ask, and what am I doing towards that end? In other words, as a Resurrected People, we must first confront and deal with the harshness in our world while at the same time delighting in the beauty and gentleness it offers. And as a Resurrected people we know we are never operating alone in our work.

I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my God, and you in me, and I in you.' (John 14:18-20, NRSV)

May you have a truly fruitful Easter and Spring Season
Pastor Clare

Our Guiding Values:

Love, grounded in Faith and Hope;
Acceptance that includes Respect and Welcoming;
Caring Relationships
(Family, Friendship, Children, Community)



The Origins of "Easter"

The origins of "Easter" are not definitive though there is a common story that I find in many places while researching. Obviously, we celebrate Easter in terms of the Resurrection Story, but its origins continually appear as pagan.

One source states, "Easter is named for a Saxon goddess who was known by the names of Oestre or Eastre, and in Germany by the name of Ostara. She is a goddess of the dawn and the spring, and her name derives from words for dawn, the shining light arising from the east. Our words for the "female hormone" estrogen derives from her name.

Ostara was, of course, a fertility goddess. Bringing in the end of winter, with the days brighter and growing longer after the vernal equinox. Her presence was felt in the flowering of plants and the birth of babies, both animal and human. The rabbit (well known for its propensity for rapid reproduction) was her sacred animal."

Another suggests, "Eggs are also representative of new life, and it's believed that decorating eggs for Easter dates back to the 13th century. Hundreds of years ago, churches had their congregations abstain from eggs during Lent, allowing them to be consumed again on Easter. According to History.com, in the 19th century Russian high society started exchanging ornately decorated eggs—even jewel encrusted—on Easter."

And "According to some sources, the Easter bunny first arrived in America in the 1700s with German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania and transported their tradition of an egg-laying hare called "Osterhase" or "Oschter Haws." Their children made nests in which this creature could lay its colored eggs. Eventually, the custom spread across the U.S. and the fabled rabbit's Easter morning deliveries expanded to include chocolate and other types of candy and gifts, while decorated baskets replaced nests. Additionally, children often left out carrots for the bunny in case he got hungry from all his hopping.

Lots of variations on a similar theme of new life and rebirth. We can try to tease out the specifics, but what remains obvious is the multitude of cultures and theologies that have interwoven to create our current celebration! You see, we have been involved in interfaith collaboration for as long as history has been! Who knew?!



Easter Egg Hunt – Sunday, April 16

We hope to have an Easter Egg Hunt for our children again this year. We need your help. Please donate plastic Easter eggs and wrapped candy and/or small toys that will fit in eggs. Eggs already stuffed are welcomed!!

Please drop off at the church by Saturday April 8 and place in the kitchen.

Faith Formation Task Force submitted by Donna Bristow and Nancy Morlock-Hollins

Over the past several months, we have gone from Faith Formation classes held in Fellowship Hall during worship to MultiGen worship where the children remain in worship with the adults. Children are invited to sit with their family or sit together at tables positioned in the worship space. There is usually an activity on the table, to entice them to listen while sitting with their friends. The children are always encouraged to participate in interactive sermons, too.

During Advent, the children worked on coloring a mural. Then in January and February, questions were proposed, such as, "What does Love look like?" Supplies were available to make creations. In March, while journeying during Lent, the children worked several weeks on making prayer beads.



A couple of MultiGen Saturday activities were also offered. The next one is Exploring Jesus' Journey from Palm Sunday to Easter, to be held on Sat. April 8. The Faith Formation meets on the first Sunday of the month following worship. Bring your ideas.

Our Adult Faith Formation class, aka Percolate, has been very active for decades. Adults gather at 8:30 a.m. before worship and usually do a book study. Coming up in April and May our percolate group is once again being inspired to read something written by an upcoming speaker of the James White lecture series. This year's speaker, Peter Rollins, will speak on May 12-14th here in Colorado Springs. Mr. Rollins is an Irish theologian whose main interest is in Radical Theology. He is not only an author, public speaker and philosopher, he is also a storyteller. It is his narrative book of parables, The Orthodox Heretic that we are going to study in Percolate. Crystal Karr is going to lead us in this endeavor this spring. As always, all are welcome. And the coffee is percolating at about 8:30 every Sunday morning. See you there!

Submitted by Nancy Morlock-Hollins.



Worship Task Force submitted by Carol Wisely-Puterbaugh

The Worship Committee met on March 12th. Some of the items we discussed are listed below:

Pastor Clare plans to provide training for leaders, communion, ushers, etc.

The committee discussed possible security mechanisms which might be used during worship.

Streaming of sermons may be a possibility on the church website.

Friendship pads will be passed at the beginning of worship which should help include all attendees.

Communion options were considered, such as revisiting the passing of cups, etc. in pews.

Clare asked the committee to be thinking of themes for special services, such as the recent "Jazz Sunday" service.

Our next meeting will be the second Sunday in April following worship. (April 9) If you have ideas or suggestions for worship, please feel free to attend our next meeting! We would love to hear from you!



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."

Dates: May 7, May 14, May 21, June 4, June 11, June 18; Sundays at Noon

Facilities Task Force submitted by Clare

The facilities task force continues to work on a number of items concerning the church property. As reported at our Town Hall Meeting, we will be remaining in the building for the next 2 1/2 years and will be determining how best to share this space with High Plains Church. Additionally, there have been some improvements made (banners on our building and lights illuminating the entrance) and planned (removal of the destroyed sculpture in front of the south building) and proposed gutter off fellowship hall.

In addition, the Korean Church is no longer using the space and as such this has allowed for folks to remain and enjoy fellowship longer after services. We have also been able to offer classes and extend meeting times on Sunday afternoons.

If anyone is interested in serving on this Force, you are always welcome. We meet on the third Sunday following worship. Please contact Jan Morgan or Clare.

The Mission Task Force is striving to reflect the diversity of our congregation with our missions. Faye and Erika remain in touch with Los Pobres who recently sent us a thank you card for our financial and material contributions. Faye is bring fresh eggs every Sunday. Proceeds donated to Los Pobres. Kayan and Nancy have been attending meetings and classes at Inside/Out and we hope to be able to be more relational with them as we learn about their needs. Donna, our contact with Family Promise, is leading the efforts to increase our meal contribution. Conversation is being had about reconfiguring space to possibly be a host church for a homeless family in the future. Our Café Justo sales continue. Manitou CCC is buying coffee now with us. Adrian Gonzalez informs me that 20 more farmers have joined the coffee co-op lately in order to be independent and self-supporting. Judy and Jon keep us informed about the needs and activities of One Nation. Vista Grande donated over 800 lbs of clothing, blankets, and sleeping bags for Standing Rock. We will be having a supply of t-shirts soon.



We're planning to include our kids in projects designed to keep the vision of the mission task force alive and relevant to all of you. Jamie and I try to stay abreast of each mission project, but as always we need participation and input from everyone! The mission task force meets on the fourth Sunday of the month.

Pledged Mission Giving

Many of you had the opportunity to pledge to the missions we support on a regular basis. The pledged amount for the year is \$7,504. To date \$1,437 of that amount has been received.

At the end of March, quarterly checks were sent to:

Los Pobres, Family Promise, Inside/Out Youth Services, One Nation Walking Together, and Cheyenne Village.

Also we continue to support the UCC Missions. Quarterly checks were sent for Our Great Hour of Sharing and Strengthen the Church.

Throughout the year, as the pledges come in, more gifts will be sent to the above mentioned missions and we'll add two more UCC missions; Neighbors in Need and The Christmas Fund.

Thank you for keeping these missions alive!

Inside-Out Youth Services by Nancy & Bob

Inside-Out is one of our missions for 2017. It is a support system for LGBTIQ youth aged 12-22. It creates a safe space for young people to gather, visit, and grow. We have witnessed such wisdom expressed by these kids. They support each other: they cheer for each other's successes and comfort each other when negative things happen. Mary, the director, maintains that her main job is primarily suicide prevention. Their main location is on South Tejon and they have a satellite program at Library 21C. For more information please see our display downstairs or visit them on the web.



All are invited to the installation of the Broadmoor Community UCC's new senior minister, Rev. Anne Cabbage on **Sunday, April 23 at 3 p.m.** At 315 Lake Ave, COS.

The Southeastern Association is presenting a workshop -

How to Use Online Tools to Engage with the World

On **Saturday, April 29** from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Church in the Wildwood UCC in Green Mountain Falls.

Cost: \$25 per church with lunch provided.

Please RSVP by April 21 to donnabristow@earthlink.net

Flyer with more information is posted in Fellowship Hall.

Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration
(formerly known as Annual Meeting)

– **June 8-11, 2017**

In 2014, we created our radical new vision. In 2015, we planted *Mission Seeds* around the Conference. In 2016, we *Bloomed in the Desert* (and in Salt Lake City!) 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, June 8-11 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.

Venue Information
(PLEASE READ CLOSELY):

Our Annual Celebration will take place at **Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne, Wyoming**. The venue has "Laramie" in its name, but we assure you that it is NOT in the town of Laramie! It's named so because it (and the town of Cheyenne) resides in Laramie County, WY. To recap: Annual Celebration is at Laramie County Community College, located in the town of Cheyenne, which resides in Laramie County :) **Check out the website for registration information.** www.rmccucc.org

Be the Church in the name of justice, fairness, and light.

James W White Lectureship Series - May 12-14, 2017
Uncertainty Can Be a Guiding Light

The Guest Theologian is Peter Rollins. Read the article on the back cover for more information and check out the host church website at www.fcucc.org

Membership

New Member Classes—Monday evenings at 5:30 p.m. on April 17 and 24.

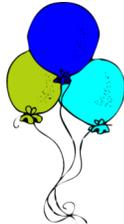
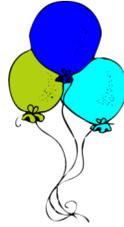
Do you want to learn more about Vista Grande? Who We Are? What We Believe?

Are you interested in the Wider Church , the United Church of Christ?

Come and listen and get your questions answered.

Birthdays for April

- 2 Nancy Morlock-Hollins
- 2 Liz Bliss
- 15 Joannie Rivers
- 16 Donna Bristow
- 17 Carolyn Gunning
- 19 Dawn Bechthold-Blueitt
- 25 Bob Howard
- 25 Eileen Phelan
- 26 Jim Price
- 26 Anna Kolm
- 30 Sami Solomon-Klebba



Anniversaries

Apr 23 Erin and Jon Elkaim

Birthdays for May

- 14 Randy Wright
- 19 Allyra Quarles
- 21 Kevin Gardner
- 22 Carol Wisely
- 23 June Bartyzel
- 27 Justin Hollins
- 28 Jennifer Strombeck
- 28 Theo Pope
- 30 Dick Burbank

Anniversaries:

- May 6 Jan Kolm and Marcie Wegner
- May 22 Max and Maurine Hale
- May 22 Joshua and Carrie Barnes
- May 29 Dave and Donna Bristow

Cleaning Schedule

Apr 1 and 8 – Donna and Dave Bristow

Apr 15 and 22 – Jackie and Jerry Moore

Apr 29 and May 6– Carolyn and Lyn Gunning

May 13 and May 20 – Carol and Phil Puterbaugh

May 27 and June 3—Donna and Dave Bristow



Women's Fellowship

Breakfast at The Omelette Parlor

Saturday April 8 at 8:30 am

900 E Fillmore St.



VISTA GRANDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

United Church of Christ

Location: 5460 N Union Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO
Mailing: PO Box 26030 COS 80936
Email: vgcc.ucc@att.net
719-599-3057
www.vgcc.org

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.

JWW Lectureship - May 12-14, 2017

Guest Speaker – Peter Rollins

Peter Rollins is a provocative writer, philosopher, storyteller and public speaker who has gained an international reputation for overturning traditional notions of religion and forming “churches” that preach the Good News that we can’t be satisfied, that life is difficult, and that we don’t know the secret. Challenging the idea that faith concerns questions relating to belief Peter’s incendiary and irreligious reading of Christianity attacks the distinction between sacred and secular, blurs the lines between theism and atheism and sets aside questions regarding life after death to explore the possibility of a life before death.

*Peter gained his higher education from Queens University, Belfast and has earned degrees (with distinction) in Scholastic Philosophy (BA Hons), Political Theory (MA) and Post-Structural thought (PhD). He is the author of numerous books, including *Insurrection*, *The Idolatry of God*, and *The Divine Magician*. He was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, currently lives in Los Angeles and will die somewhere as yet not known.*



He has authored several books. The adult class, Percolate is exploring his narrative book of parables, [The Orthodox Heretic](#)

Go to fcucc.org for all the details of the lectureship weekend activities.

April 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
2 Sunday Schedule Communion Faith Formation Ministry	3 5 pm Steering Committee Mtg	4	5 9:30 am Prayer Shawl 6:30 pm Choir	6	7	8 8:30 am Women's Fellowship (offsite) 9:30 am MultiGen Faith Formation
9 Sunday Schedule Worship Ministry	10	11	12 8 am Men's Breakfast at Wade's Cafe 6:30 pm Choir	13  Maundy Thursday	14	15
16 Sunday Schedule Facilities Task Force	17 5:30 p.m. New Member Class	18	19 6:30 pm Choir	20	21	22
23 Sunday Schedule Mission Task Force	24 5:30 p.m. New Member Class	25	26 6:30 pm Choir	27	28	29 Southeastern Association Workshop (Offsite)
30 Sunday Schedule						

May 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>Sunday Schedule 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Worship 11:15 am Fellowship</p>	<p>2</p> <p>5 pm Steering Committee Mtg</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9:30 am Prayer Shawl 6:30 pm Choir</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	
<p>7</p> <p>Sunday Schedule Communion Faith Formation Ministry White Privilege Class</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>8 am Men's Breakfast at Wade's Cafe 6:30 pm Choir</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>JWW Lecture Series (off site)</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Happy Mother's Day</p> <p>Sunday Schedule Worship Ministry White Privilege Class</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>6:30 pm Choir</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Sunday Schedule Facilities Task Force White Privilege Class</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>6:30 pm Choir</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Sunday Schedule Mission Task Force</p>	<p>29</p> 	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>6:30 pm Choir</p>			