

How [has] believing in hope led your beloved community to take action? *By Clare Twomey*

The Rocky Mountain Conference has sought out short stories from Conference churches which answer the question: How [has] believing in hope led your beloved community to take action? These stories will be shared at the RMC annual meeting June 8-11 in Cheyenne, WY.

By definition, ours is a community of hope. We are a small congregation which has embraced the call to live into the gospel. A congregation which has been infused with the Spirit and continues to reach beyond the proverbial four walls of a building, in order to define what it means to Be The Church. The various stories offered by some of our members, enumerate the ways hope has called us to action. Our missions, our interfaith collaboration with the local UU congregation, our continued commitment to radical hospitality, all demonstrate our dedication to our call, thus rising to what we can do rather than falling prey to the anxieties of what we can't do.

There is a sweet irony here. So many churches these days are worried about numbers in the seats, doors staying open, bills being paid. To be sure, we do give a nod or two to these realities, but our primary focus asks: **What can we do now? Who can we be now? With whom can we be in relationship today?** We have not allowed ourselves to become so overwhelmed with our future that we miss living in our present. This focus gives our missions, our ministries, our hospitality the intentionality they deserve. This 'living in the present' means that those who enter here, receive the magnitude of our inclusion and hospitality, our warmth and our love. While not the original intent of our actions and focus, more 'butts in the seats!' is what we've gotten.

Continued on page 3.

Save the Date ...
Outdoor Worship and Picnic at Fox Run Park
Sunday August 20.

Inside this issue:

General Information	2
Page 1. Continued	3
Membership	4-5
Wider Church	6
Birthdays	7
Pastoral Relations Survey	8
Calendars	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

Believing in Hope (continued from page 1.)

Since Easter, we have welcomed twenty new members, including five children, to our community. Currently, there are five additional folks who have expressed an interest in joining Vista Grande. This quantitative growth is a direct by-product of the Hope this congregation holds. Our authenticity, devotion to the gospel, and our desire to Be The Church, has increased our numbers simply because, in this place, folks find a home. They find a safe, non-judgmental place to 'be'. They find a church that walks the walk, following in the footsteps of Jesus, questing after justice and mercy. This unexpected outcome, demonstrates the beautiful, ironic twist exemplified in the gospels: love begets love. And here, in full circle, lies our hope.

The obvious conclusion here is "WOW! Look what we can do!! And of course, participating in the dynamic life of this church is what makes this statement a reality. There are so many ways to be involved with the work of this community. There are numerous missions which can always use the passion and enthusiasm of those who desire to do that kind of work. There are various

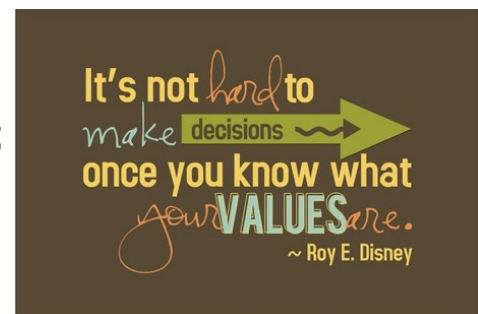


opportunities to participate in the collaborative interfaith effort with the High Plains community. Obviously, each week there are liturgical options such as lay leaders, ushers and greeters, not to mention fellowship planners. There are task forces; facilities, faith formation, missions and worship. There is music to be made in choir or with special talents one might be willing to share.

There are a variety of adult faith formation classes and children's faith formation in services and on occasional Saturdays. There is cleaning to be done, a lawn to be cut, flowers to be planted, grants to be written and funds to be raised! And no doubt, 'stuff' we haven't even considered. And so, as we get ready to relax into the summer, I invite you to consider how you would like to "Be The Church", and get involved with what promises to be a very Hopeful future!

Our Guiding Values:

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



Membership

On April 16, we welcomed into church membership by transfer:

Chad and Lisa Siebert and their children Ellyson and Nicholas; and

Mary Fulster

Mary is now the official owner of a stray cat, named Lucy. The relationship began this winter when “Kitty” was seeking a warm place to hang out. After no responses from “found cat” messages, she has been recently adopted and now Mary and Lucy share adventures and love.

On May 14, we welcomed the following members by affirmation:

Rachel Coder and Linda Adams;

Rachel and Linda share the love of people. They enjoy spending time diving and singing. They also enjoy football and Linda enjoys disc golf. They see themselves as ambassadors and educators in the world regarding transgender issues.

Contact Info: 2640 Clarendon Dr. 80916; adamslinda91@gmail.com; ROC2016@mail.com
(R) 719-393-3429 and (L) 719-648-1763

Tracy Berry and Meghan Harrison and their children Skylar and Nico;

Tracy is a veterinary technology student which is her biggest passion in life. She enjoys playing golf, cooking, and hanging with the dogs.

Meghan is a medical assistant with hopes of becoming a nurse.

Skylar enjoys hanging with her dog, roller skating and playing video games. She just finished 4th grade.

Nico enjoys minecraft, roller blading, and swimming. He just finished 2nd grade.

They enjoy the openness of Vista Grande and hope to get involved with the mission program.

Contact Info: 2035 Flintwood Dr. 80910 ; harrisonberry@hotmail.com
(T) 719-464-2369 and (M) 719-393-3529

Dana Zimmerman;

Dana grew up in Colorado Springs and graduated from Air Academy High School.

She was married for 30 years and has three daughters born in Tacoma, Miami, and Houston and settled in Park City, Utah for 18 years. When her marriage ended she returned to college and obtained a degree in Accounting. She returned to Colorado Springs 10 years ago; worked for several years and is now retired. Her family, three daughters, two sons-in-law and 4 grandchildren all live in Colorado Springs. She enjoys quilting and taking family cruises.

At Vista Grande she has enjoyed the variety of Adult Faith Formation studies. She hopes that we will soon be able to provide a youth program and is excited about the future multi-cultural center.

Contact Info: 1422 Hollyhock Dr 80907; danaquilts@yahoo.com 719-313-0120

Membership (continued)

We also welcomed by affirmation:



**Liz Bliss;
Jon Forshee and Erika Borboa;
Kelli and Tim Baptist and their children Eva and Dante**

We welcome you with joy in the life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ.

Graduations

We share your pride in your family members on these accomplishments:

Graduation from Kindergarten to Grade School:

Brigit Cherney; daughter of Luke and Audrey Miles-Cherney.

Transitions from 5th Grade to Middle School:

Evelyn Cherney; daughter of Luke and Audrey Miles-Cherney.

Ethan Elkaim; son of Erin and Jon Elkaim.

Anna Kolm; daughter of Jan Kolm and Marcie Wegner.



Graduation from High School

Elena Martinez-Vivot; adopted granddaughter of John and Deborah Tinsley;
Graduate of Colorado Springs School. She will be attending Colorado College in the fall.

Michael Burbank; grandson of Richard and Carol Burbank;

Graduate of Canon City High School, Colorado.

Killian Moss; grandson of Richard and Carol Burbank;

Graduate of Yokota High School, Japan.

College Graduates

Chase Bongirno; son-in-law of Lori Gardner; received Masters in Business degree

The Wider Church

As people of the United Church of Christ, affirming our **Statement of Faith**, we seek within the Church Universal to participate in God's mission and to follow the way of the crucified and risen Christ.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are called and commit ourselves:

- To praise God, confess our sin, and joyfully accept God's forgiveness;
- To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our suffering world;
- To embody God's Love for all people;
- To hear and give voice to creation's cry for justice and peace;
- To name and confront the powers of evil within and among us;
- To repent our silence and complicity with the forces of chaos and death;
- To preach and teach with the power of the living Word;
- To join oppressed and troubled people in the struggle for liberation;
- To work for justice, healing, and wholeness of life;
- To embrace the unity of Christ's church;
- To discern and celebrate the present and coming reign of God.



About this testimony

The UCC Statement of Mission, 1987, was drafted by a church wide conference on mission in Houston, Texas, in which representatives from all communities in the church—including evangelicals, liberals, and others—tried to find common ground. The statement was affirmed by General Synod 16 later that year.

This year, General Synod 31 will be held in Baltimore MD with the theme: Make It Glad. Dave Bristow is a delegate representing the Rocky Mountain Conference. Also attending are Pastor Clare and Donna Bristow.

Check out the UCC website to get more information on what General Synod is all about. There's a short video with lots of information.

<http://synod.uccpages.org/>

The Southeastern Association is presenting
a workshop -

How to Use Online Tools to Engage with the World

On **Saturday, July 22** from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Church in the Wildwood UCC in Green Mountain Falls. {The original workshop was postponed because of weather.}

Cost: \$25 per church with lunch provided.

Please RSVP by July 14 to donnabristow@earthlink.net

Flyer with more information is posted in Fellowship Hall.

Birthdays for June

- 1 Dana Zimmerman
- 2 Kamryn Hollins Happy 1st!
- 8 Zelda Pope
- 19 Lyn Gunning
- 23 Julia Hollins
- 25 Cindy Solomon-Klebba
- 29 Shari (Curly) Solomon-Klebba

Anniversaries

- June 11 Bob and Nancy Hollins
(Happy 40th!)
- June 16 Clare Twomey and Liz Bliss
- June 19 Jerry and Jackie Moore

Birthdays for July

- 7 Bob Hollins
- 7 Marcie Wegner
- 7 Shawn Jones
- 7 Gabriel Richardson
- 15 Judy Druelinger
- 15 Jerry Moore
- 15 Margaret Natelli
- 25 Faye Gallegos
- 27 Eduardo Martin
- 30 Deborah Tinsley

Anniversaries

- July 3 Maggie and Ron Forth
- July 18 Jim and Bev Price
- July 26 Tammie Davis and Ruth Eastwood
- July 28 Chase and Melissa Bongirno

Finances

Pledges for Operational Expenses

Pledges for Mission

As a reminder, many of us pledged to the operational mission of the church and to the wider church mission. This is a reminder to keep your pledges up-to-date.

It is almost time to send off the 2nd quarter mission support checks. These organizations count on our generosity.

THANK YOU!

Cleaning Schedule

May 27 and June 3—Donna and Dave Bristow

June 10 and 17 – Jackie and Jerry Moore

June 24 and July 1 – Carolyn and Lyn Gunning

July 8 and 15 – Carol and Phil Puterbaugh

July 22 and July 29 —Donna and Dave Bristow



Property Workday – Saturday June 17 9 a.m. – Noon

Small Jobs and Larger Ones

Bring your work gloves, outdoor garden tools, and energy. We'll supply the job list and light refreshments.

Many hands make light work!

About a year ago Pastor Clare approached the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) and asked about having an evaluation of her performance be conducted. Having reviewed the PRC handbook and also some of us having been involved in the past with pastor's evaluation we decided it was a good idea. I recalled having sat in a Congregations Alive workshop conducted by Rev Sue Artt that she had discussed the need for pastor evaluations, so I contacted her hoping the conference would have a suitable resource we could use. Well it turned out they didn't. Off to the internet, and in surfing through UCC.org I discovered a "CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY AND MINISTERIAL EXCELLENCE: INTERSECTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR MINISTRY" a recent paper by Rev. Dr. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi who is the Director, UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD). One of her key premises of her paper couples church vitality and pastor's performance as she states: "The intersections between these two areas are dynamic, and learning more about the relationship between congregational vitality and ministerial excellence has the potential to transform the ways in which we lead the church and be the church."

Armed with the questions from Rev. Dr. Lizardy-Hajbi, we prepared "VGCC VITALITY AND CLERGY EXCELLENCE SURVEY", which was handed out over a number of Sundays earlier this year and 36 anonymous responses were received. For each question a rating value of 1 to 5 was expected where 1 was low or poor and 5 was high or excellent.

The three topic areas, which had multiple questions in each topic were:

- The vitality of VGCC resulted in an average rating of 4.48
- VGCC's congregational engagement resulted in an average rating of 4.40
- The pastor's skills or characteristics resulted in an average rating of 4.86

Three additional questions were asked:

How long have you been going to worship services or activities at this congregation?
27.8% less than a year, 13.9% 1 to 2 years, 2.8% 3 to 5 years, 5.6% 6 to 10 years, 8.3% 11 to 20 and 38.9% over 20 years.

How often do you attend worship or participate in other activities in your congregation?
5.6% rarely, 11.1% two or three times a month, 47.2% every week, and 33.3% more than once a week.

Over the last two years, has there been any conflict in your congregation?
66.7% no conflict, 13.9% minor conflict and 13.9% didn't know.

There were 8 comments that were penned; all of which were positive.

Detailed results and statistics will be made available at a later date.

While we would have liked to have seen more surveys turned in, we feel the results reflect the makeup of our congregation in both longevity and participation. The results clearly show we believe ourselves to be both vital and engaging and our pastor's performance is excellent.

PRC—Dave Bristow, Carol Burbank, Nancy Morlock-Hollins, Jim Price

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sunday Schedule 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Worship 11:15 am Fellowship		JUNE	The choir is taking a well deserved break for the summer.	1	2	3
4 Sunday Schedule Communion Faith Formation Ministry White Privilege Class	5 5 pm Steering Committee Mtg	6 6 pm Contemplative Conversations	7 9:30 am Prayer Shawl	8 9 Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration At Cheyenne WY		
11 Sunday Schedule Worship Ministry White Privilege Class	12	13 6 pm Contemplative Conversations	14 8 am Men's Breakfast at Wade's Cafe	15	16	17 9 am—Noon Outdoor Workday
18 Sunday Schedule Facilities Task Force White Privilege Class	19	20 6 pm Contemplative Conversations	21 9:30 am Prayer Shawl	22	23	24
25 Sunday Schedule Missions Task Force	26	27	28	29 30 General Synod 31 Baltimore MD	 GENERAL SYNOD 2017	

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sunday Schedule 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Worship 11:15 am Fellowship		JULY	The choir is taking a well deserved break for the summer.			1 General Synod Continues through July 4th
2 Sunday Schedule Communion Faith Formation Ministry	3		5 NO Prayer Shawl Ministry	6	7	8
9 Sunday Schedule Worship Ministry	10 5 pm Steering Committee Mtg	11 6 pm Contemplative Conversations	12 8 am Men's Breakfast at Wade's Cafe	13	14	15
16 Sunday Schedule Facilities Task Force	17	18 6 pm Contemplative Conversations	19 9:30 am Prayer Shawl	20	21	22 Online Tools Workshop (off site)
23 Sunday Schedule Missions Task Force	24	25 6 pm Contemplative Conversations	26	27	28	29
30 Sunday Schedule	31					



**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.



**Pride Weekend in Colorado Springs is
July 8 and 9th**

Again this year, we'll collaborate with High Plains Church UU by having a combined worship and marching in the Pride Day on the Sunday.

We'll be marching north on Tejon St and west on Colorado Ave to America the Beautiful Park.

More details to follow.