



**VISTA GRANDE COMMUNITY CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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Pastor: Rev. Clare Twomey

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.” 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

We are
*An Open and Affirming
Congregation*

We believe
*God’s Love is for
All the People*

We respond
*3 Great Loves
For a Just World for All ...
Love of Neighbor
Love of Children
Love of Creation*

Congregation at work throughout 2017...

OUR PURPOSE

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.

Congregation at work throughout 2017

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PASTOR'S REPORT

Rev. Clare Twomey

I stated in a recent blast that I couldn't believe how quickly the year had gone by, yet when I looked back on all that has happened, it seems as if this has been one of the longest years on record! Well, at least since I've been here.

January 2017 presented us with many challenges, most of which were imposed on our theologically progressive, justice loving congregation, from outside 'sources'. The year began with a sense of gloom and potential doom. We struggled to anticipate the future of our nation as those in power began to flex their muscles and alienate those already historically marginalized. It was with great grace, then, that we chose to begin our year, on the suggestion of civic leader and community activist, Dennis Apuan, with an interfaith prayer breakfast on Jan 20, Inauguration day. Five different faiths were represented: Christian, Unitarian Universalist, Muslim, Buddhist, and Jewish as we gathered to pray, with intentionality, for the leaders of our country and the world. It was a beautiful reminder of the power of community and spiritual inclusion. And it gave us hope.

In January 2017, we challenged ourselves to live as if we are a large church and introduced the idea of Task Forces. These groups were initiated in order to give some structure and organization to Faith Formation, our Property/facilities, Worship, and Missions. Each group was staffed with volunteers with the expectation that each would take on the responsibilities necessary to assure the vision and mission of our church. While we are still fine tuning the responsibility of each group, the Task Forces (soon to be Ministry Teams) accomplished their basic goal to re-introduce structure and congregational participation in the life of the church. We concluded our first month with our annual meeting

During the winter months we had taken a break from discussions with High Plains as we attempted to sort through some personality and other issues identified by our vision groups. I continued to meet with Dana, the pastor of High Plains, so as to forge ahead to continue to explore sharing space. In March, a combined dinner was sponsored by VG, shared with HP, in order to allow for a renewed starting place. We remained hopeful during this discernment process, that we would be able to come together and become a collaborative community. As such, we all participated in Pride Parade, shared meals, engaged in interfaith conversation in October in a 5 week class, and we still continue to plan ways we can 'do interfaith' together. However, over the months, it became increasingly clear, especially to Vista Grande's group, that sharing space would not be conducive to our church community. There were some irreconcilable differences concerning symbology and perspectives on church policy and leadership. In addition, there were growing concerns shared by some congregants with the Steering Committee, over whether this move with HP would hinder our mission and sabotage our congregational unity. It was thus determined, that while we remain faithful to the idea of interfaith work, sharing space with High Plains would be a detriment to the health and vitality of Vista Grande.

With regard to our continued commitment to interfaith collaboration a Buddhist nun Sister Aaya Dhammadhira offered 3 separate classes and she continues to participate in our weekly Contemplative Conversations group. In addition, Carla Vogel and her Husband Barry have participated in worship services and have held a special afternoon of contemplation with a party for Sufi mystic Rumi. These relationships continue to enrich this community and will hopefully become even more robust in the future.

With regard to other exciting activities this year, Family Faith Formation, in conjunction with Multigenerational worship, has proven to be a great success. Families participate with their young people on a season basis (approx. every 6 weeks) on Saturday morning. This allows the kids to remain in church for worship and participate every Sunday. The presence of our children in our worship service has provided a wonderful and necessary energy to our services and the life of our congregation. They continue to surprise and inspire with their participation and insights. It will be exciting to see how much more they will be involved in the near future!

And for the first time in years, 3 of our middle schoolers participated in a retreat sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Conference at La Foret. They had a fantastic time and have all stated they want to go again. What a great way to be radically connected to our larger denomination!

This year we welcomed 17 new members (covenantal partners) plus 8 children, to our congregation making the grand total of partners (formally members) to 76. New members continue to add to the unique and beautiful personality of this church and many have become actively involved in the life of the church. For example: fundraising. We held our first fund raiser in many years and, while it required a lot of work and was a learning experience for all, when all was said and done, it brought in \$2200 designated for missions. In addition, VG implemented an ongoing fundraiser through King Soopers which has brought in approx. \$1200 to date. This says so much about our desire to be a viable and relevant church!

We continue to be in relationship and conversation with our coach through the Center for Progressive Renewal and I have numerous leadership classes that I can take because of that connection! I recently began the first on "Worship".

Our missions were able to reach all financial commitments and then some. **AND**, we contributed thousands of dollars of in kind materials to our missions. We furthered our personal relationships with One Nation, Inside Out and Los Pobres and Family Promise through volunteer participation on a regular basis. For a short time, we collaborated with Broadmoor Community Church and a former Lutheran Services volunteer to assist a couple of refuge families here in the Springs with household items, fabric scraps for sewing quilts, and a bicycle. (The primary family has since moved out of state for work and as such that relationship has terminated.)

We continue to sponsor and support our Member in Discernment Crystal Karr and are looking forward to having a seminary intern join us in August.

A small committee worked diligently for most of the year on our by-laws so that we might better reflect what it means to be church in the 21st century.

We blessed animals, celebrated Sabbath with our children, sang and danced with our Native American neighbors, and enjoyed the music of inspirational artist Denise Rosier. We baptized little Ms. Kyelie and said our good byes to our beloved Bob Howard, long time member Joanie King, and the cherished mother of Jeannie Harrington.

Some of us went to UCC Synod--in the best city in the world--, and still others participated in rallies across our city to stand for Transgender Military, LGBTQIA folk, undocumented immigrants, DACA recipients, and in protest of racial and religious hostilities.

We studied White Privilege and then struggled with the pains and suffering of people of color and other marginalized people in our country, our community, and our congregation. We supported

hurricane relief above and beyond our pledged giving, and remain unconditionally and radically hospitable to all who entered here.

Personally, I rallied, protested, marched, and prayed for and with those affected by unjust policies. I attended Inside Out and Citizen Project breakfasts, installations, and ordinations. I participated monthly in our SEA Committee on Ministry, attended Rocky Mountain Annual Celebration, UCC Synod and SEA Annual Gathering. I led classes and forums on race and interfaith and facilitated Contemplative Conversations. I've met with our coach numerous times, our conference minister 4 times for guidance and pie, and introduced the beginnings of what it would mean for us to be a Just Peace Church.

Whew! This has been a very eventful year and I'm not sure I have captured everything here! What a blessing it is to serve a community who has committed themselves to living the gospel even in the midst of national uncertainty, and when choosing to live with complacency could be so much easier. I applaud you. I thank you. I thank our Beloved for you. And I am so looking forward to the next chapter of our journey together!

Clare

MODERATOR'S REPORT

Erin Elkaim

Hi, VGCC family! What a year 2017 has been! We've seen folks come and go and had many changes, throughout the year. But our focus on our vision of who WE as Vista Grande Community Church UCC want to be, is and always will be our priority.

In 2017, we informed SOR (Shrine of Remembrance) that we would not entertain selling the building to them, prior to 2019. We wanted to focus on what we, VGCC wanted to do and know where we would be until 2019. We had also discussed sharing space with High Plains UU. We have since decided in the best interest of VGCC to not move forward with that. We had our first silent auction to raise money for the missions that we support throughout the year. We have received grant monies and helped out with hurricane relief. We've also welcomed new covenantal partners over the course of 2017! We are also getting an intern who has many ideas to help us get more involved with social justice issues and other important topics. She will be with VGCC for about 10 months. We look forward to working with Mallory beginning in the fall.

Thank you for sticking with us. I know times have been trying and there have been a lot of ideas on what and where we, VGCC will be going or doing. I look forward to what 2018 will bring us and all the wonderful adventures we will go on together!

Thanks!

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Steering Committee 2017

- Moderator: Erin Elkaim (2nd term)
- Asst. Moderator: Jacque Bechthold-Blueitt
- Treasurer: Dawn Bechthold - Blueitt
- Financial Secretary: John Tinsley
- Clerk: Deborah Tinsley
- Member at large: Jim Price
- Member-at-large : Jeannie Harrington

All members are continuing on the NEW Executive Council for 2018.

CHURCH CLERK'S REPORT

Deborah Tinsley

The Steering Committee met 12 times during 2017. For a full report of the business of the church, policies developed, and planning that took place in those meetings, the minutes of each meeting are available for review by any member of the church. Minutes are posted on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall, and a copy (electronic or paper) may be requested from any Steering Committee member or the Administrative Assistant.

Vista Grande UCC began the year with 64 recorded members. Three persons transferred in from other churches, fourteen joined by reaffirmation, three members were moved to inactive status, and two members died during the year (Joanie King in April, and Rev. Bob Howard in December). Vista Grande ended the year with 76 members. Average worship attendance stands at 56.

The Korean Church, which had been using Vista Grande for their worship gatherings, underwent a change in leadership, and discontinued utilizing our sanctuary.

Shrine of Remembrance continues to rent space from the church.

There was a Congregational Annual Meeting held on January 29, 2017, with 30 members in attendance. The report from this meeting is included herein. After elections at this meeting the position of a second Member at Large and Financial Secretary were left vacant. However, by the time the Steering Committee met in February, Jeannie Harrington was appointed second Member at Large, and John Tinsley was appointed to complete Jeannie's last year as Financial Secretary. The Steering Committee was complete: Erin Elkaim as Moderator, Assistant Moderator Jacque Bechthold-Blueitt, Treasurer Dawn Bechthold-Blueitt, Financial Secretary John Tinsley, Clerk Deborah Tinsley, Members at Large Jim Price and Jeannie Harrington.

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Submitted by Dave Bristow

The team of Dave Bristow, Carol Burbank, Jim Price, and Nancy Morlock-Hollins remained the Pastoral Relations Committee during 2017.

“The Pastoral Relations Committee is a standing committee in a local church that seeks to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between the pastor and members of the congregation. The committee serves in two primary ways; as an advisory group to the pastor and as support for the pastor's leadership. As an advisory group the committee shares ideas, dreams, hopes, expectations and concerns of the congregation with the pastor. As support for the pastor, the committee interprets roles, functions, and needs of the pastor to the congregation.”

Early in the year, we asked members and friends to participate in the "Vitality and Clergy Excellence Survey" that we had developed with the assistance of the Rocky Mountain Conference, late in 2016.

There were 36 responders to the survey who we felt were representative of the whole congregation and after reviewing the results we concluded:

1. our congregation has vitality
2. our congregation is being engaged
3. our pastor is highly skilled and exhibits very positive characteristics
4. our congregation whose make up ranges from newcomers to congregants with more than 20 years at VGCC
5. our congregation ranges in congregants who attend or participate once a month to those who are active more than once a week
6. our congregation is facing little to no conflicts

In summary, the survey results demonstrate there is a good match between the congregation and our pastor, there is an exciting sense of purpose for VGCC, and we are graced with a faithful passionate pastor who has strong skills.

We met with Pastor Clare several times during the year. We shared the details of the survey results especially the remarks made by some members.

We also shared the survey results with RMC as they were helpful in its development.

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Jim Price and Jeannie Harrington

Members at Large act as the liaison from the congregation to the Executive Council. Their position requires neutrality as a representative position between Executive Council and the entire congregation. If you have anything that you'd like to address with a Member at Large, contact Jim Price or Jeannie Harrington.

The Executive Council consists of Moderator, Erin Elkaim; Assistant Moderator, Jacque Bechthold-Blueitt; Treasurer, Dawn Bechthold-Blueitt; Financial Secretary, John Tinsley; and Clerk, Deborah Tinsley.

ADMIN REPORT

Donna Bristow

In continuation of completing our child safe policy and working on best practices in finances, we performed background checks on our financial folks and nursery care providers through Praesidium, Inc, contracted through our UCC Insurance Board and viewed online "safe church" training modules through Armatus.

Personnel Update: We had a staffing change. Dani Diaz, our nursery attendant from 07/17/16 – 02/12/17 resigned from her position at VGCC to move back to Pueblo. We used volunteer sources until Liz Bliss was hired on 07/09/17. She served in the nursery until her resignation date of 12/31/17. The little ones in the nursery loved Liz's energy and enthusiasm. She will be missed.

The Korean Church discontinued using space in the main building as they encountered a pastoral change.

Lease Agreement: The Shrine of Remembrance (SOR) continued to lease South Hall. SOR has the option to purchase the property in 2019.

VISION TASK FORCE

Submitted by Deborah Tinsley

"We will continue our partnership with our community through our missions, utilizing our progressive biblical theology, open and affirming commitment, and genuine actions in our love of God." So spoke Carol Burbank in one of the Vision Task Force meetings this year. The vision held for Vista Grande (VG) is one of progressive, ONA, collaboration with faith groups that share our values, as well as through non-profits doing the work of peace and justice in Colorado Springs. To this end, VG, through Pastor Clare, has been in continued dialogue with Kamel Elwazeir (Iman: Masajid Al-Salaam), Deborah Walker with Citizens Project, Dennis Apuan (former State Legislator, Community organizer, activist, founder of Colorado Media Justice Foundation). Further, Sister Ayya Dhammadhira (Buddhist nun) was invited to hold classes at VG for our members and others from the community; VG presented what was to be a six week course on White Privilege, which became a thirteen week course at the request of the participants, culminating in a panel discussion during worship; VG presented a book study and video series on Interfaith Dialogue in collaboration with High Plains Unitarian (HP) at VG; VG collaborated with HP by jointly participating in the Pride Parade; VG members and Pastor Clare were involved in other demonstrations for justice and peace in our community; the Mission Team implemented a policy of relational, hands-on focus to mission outreach. This is a brief, not complete, description of some of the actions VG has taken in the last year to further the vision of a mission driven, collaborative and radically inclusive church.

One part of the vision of collaboration and involvement with different faith groups in our community was the investigation of the possibility of HP and VG sharing space in one or another's current locations. It evolved that vision groups in both churches would look at the possibility of HP coming to share space in VG facility. Twelve joint meetings were held in 2017 between the two churches to work out the particulars of that concept.

In November, it was clear that a number of issues had arisen that resulted in the decision of VG withdrawing from the concept of shared space. A brief, and very incomplete synopsis is that respect

for the identity of VG as a Christian church, and respect for what VG would consider sacred symbols representing that identity, was not expressed by HP. In attempting to work out boundary issues, it was determined that congregations in the UCC seem to have a higher respect for clergy than do UUs; this became problematic, and was unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of VG.

While the concept of shared space came to an end, the idea of collaboration on projects and events continues to move forward. HP and VG will be involved in screening Youth Documentaries through the Youth Documentaries Academy. Compelling issues of our time, such as suicide, what it is to live transgendered, adoption, high functioning autistic youth, and other films will be screened for the community, with question and answer periods to follow. The purpose in this particular collaboration with HP and the Youth Documentary Academy is to further our commitment to be involved with our community at large, and pertains both to our interfaith and community outreach.

The vision of VG as being relational in our missions, radically welcoming, progressive and inclusive leaders in our community and our denomination goes far beyond the one relationship with HP.

Through the coaching we are receiving from the Center for Progressive Renewal – a requirement of our grant – we were encouraged to look at what no longer works in terms of benchmarks for the church. One in particular, the age old concept of membership, no longer holds, finding that those people who will avoid commitment to a church may gather around shared values, shared issues. VG has taken the bold step to rewrite our bylaws' definition of membership, to be radically inclusive of all who wish to investigate their faith journey, as Covenantal Partners (C.P.), uniting around the defining values we articulate and the issues we support through our mission outreach. To further the invitation to those that might not wish to become C.P., the concept of 'Affiliates' was included; these are people with strong ties to VG who wish to be involved in the ministry and mission but are not ready to declare themselves C.P.

The Conference, and even the National church, await what they perceive as the future for the greater church, as we present this concept of Covenantal Partners to our congregation at this Annual Meeting. Our congregation is like the Star Ship Enterprise, boldly going where no one has gone before!

Continuing to develop our vision of the church with financial grant support is tied to our accomplishing specific goals. It is important to underscore the fact that VG has been on a yearlong trajectory of accomplishments and meeting these commitments required by the grant: We are, and were before receiving the grant, an Open and Affirming Congregation; we are, and have been, a 5 for 5 Church in terms of financially supporting our denominational missions, and were recognized by the National church for this commitment; VG presented the *White Privilege* curriculum, and found participants so engrossed in the topic that the six week course ran thirteen weeks at the insistence of the participants; while we are not yet fully compliant with being an *Accessible to All* facility, it is a goal to which we have been, and are, committed; we will be presenting the *Multi-Racial Multi-Cultural Community* Bible Study in 2018; beyond these requirements, we are educating and inviting the congregation into the process of developing the *Just Peace* designation for VG.

This is only a brief overview of all that VG is envisioning, promoting, and investigating in support and furtherance of our goals of being a progressive, inclusive leader in our community. All members and friends of VG are invited into the vision, and into the work we are called to as a church dedicated to the love of God, the love of neighbor, the love of creation.

LOVE GROUNDED IN FAITH AND HOPE

WORSHIP

Submitted by Carol Wisely-Puterbaugh

2017 has been an exciting year for Vista Grande! Multi-generational worship began in January. Children remain in the sanctuary during worship, and are included in conversations, projects, etc. A number of Saturday opportunities were planned and provided for our children. Special thanks to Pastor Clare and to all those who made the Saturday activities happen.

Two special services which were a part of worship this year were “Jazz Sunday” before Lent, and “Las Posadas” in December. Thanks to all the participants in these services which included a number of talented musicians!

Pastor Clare provided training for worship leaders, ushers, and communion servers.

The task force also provided input on possible security mechanisms to be addressed during worship.

Other events which happened throughout the year were the annual picnic at Fox Run Park, Blessing of the Animals, the Thanksgiving potluck, and fellowship activities for both Women and Men.

The Worship Task Force will be meeting on Saturday, January 27th, 10:00 a.m. at the church. We hope to see anyone interested in participating in this task force to come and share ideas, thoughts, etc. Come join us in planning for 2018!

VGCC Choral Music

Submitted by David Hudson

The end of 2017 marks my first complete calendar year serving as VGCC Music Director, and what a fantastic year it was! To begin with, as a quick follow-up to last year's letter, I'd like to report that my reading skills, while still a challenge, continue to improve with each new musical arrangement, and I look forward to tackling some slightly more difficult pieces during the 2018 season. As always, I greatly appreciate everyone's support and the choir's harmonious teamwork!

There were so many musical highlights in 2017 that it's difficult to pick, but several that stood out for me personally were Jazz Sunday in February, getting to work with all of the different soloists over the summer, and having the opportunity to perform a duet with recording artist Denise Rosier in September.

The idea of a Jazz Sunday came to me while speaking with my good friend Brad Eastin who mentioned having performed numerous Jazz Sundays at Broadmoor Community Church. I bounced it off Clare and not only did she like the idea, she proposed doing a Dixieland Mardi Gras event; how perfect! Finding different local musicians to participate (including Brad), coming up with song selections, and deciding who would perform vocals on each song was a bigger task than anticipated, but it all came together with a couple days to spare and everything went off without a hitch. My deep gratitude to Rev. Clare for allowing that day's service to be all about the music, plans for our second annual Jazz Sunday 2018 are already underway!

I'm so proud of everyone who stepped up to perform special music over the summer and I really enjoyed the variety of musical styles. Some of my favorite moments were singing *Seasons of Love* from Rent as a duet with Lori Gardner on the day the folks from High Plains Church attended our service, performing Chopin's *Nocturno* as a violin/piano duet with Lyn Gunning (talk about challenging my reading skills!), and who can forget the piano/guitar/singing duet Clare and I did of Billy Bragg's song *Do Unto Others*. In the end, I'm happy to report there was just one Sunday throughout all of 2017 without special music and that was only because the time was needed for a special congregational conversation that particular day.

Clare handed me a Denise Rosier CD during our one-on-one monthly meeting in September 2016 and mentioned how much she liked the music. One week later I became Facebook friends with Denise and wrote to her about Vista Grande Community Church. One thing lead to another, Denise sent us her song books, the choir performed her hit *Hallelujah Today* for special music, and a bunch of us went to see her concert at the Center for Spiritual Living; a meaningful bond had formed. Well lo and behold, Denise and Christy relocated to Colorado Springs in summer 2017 and in late August, I received an email from Clare letting me know that Denise was available to come perform at VGCC the following Sunday. I immediately got busy learning to play and sing harmonies on a wonderful selection of her original songs, and that Sunday turned out to be a truly uplifting and heartwarming musical experience.

FAITH FORMATION

Vision for Christian Education aka Faith Formation

VGCC will provide stimulating, participatory educational experiences for all ages – children, youth and adults. Shared discoveries may include bible studies, study of church history, literature and other media that nurture our spiritual growth. While our educational experiences may be held at different venues we will seek to connect our learning to our daily lives.

Kids' Faith Formation

Submitted by Donna Bristow

During 2017, we transitioned from Faith Formation classes in Fellowship Hall to MultiGen worship where the children remain in the worship setting along 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.

To expand our learning experiences, we held four Family Faith Formation Saturdays.

April 8 - Exploring Jesus' Journey from Palm Sunday to Easter

The children made prayer beads to hand out to the adults at church on Sunday.

Sep 9 - Three Great Loves: Love of Children, Love of Neighbors, and Love of Creation

The children made rainbow candles out of broken crayons (recycle material) and began the blanket project for the children at Los Pobres (children and neighbors). This tied in the Three Great Loves. The children were given a booklet to write their stories or draw pictures of times when they were reminded of these Great Loves.

Oct 21 - *Children's Sabbath*

The children planned the worship "message" with Pastor Clare and volunteered to be readers, ushers, etc. for the Sunday worship service. The kids were amazing! And their message was too!! David Hudson joined us to teach the children a song that the choir would help sing the next day.

Dec 2 - *Las Posadas*

The **Las Posadas** celebration commemorates the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem and their search for shelter in preparation for Jesus' birth.

The children traced their body shape and painted the story characters; Mary, Joseph, an Innkeeper, and an Angel. Luke and Audrey made all the signs for the Inns. We were ready to participate in the story on Sunday, Dec. 17.

Attendance at these Saturday activities ranged from 2 - 13 children and 4 - 8 adults.

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Matthew 18:20.

A special thank you to all the moms and dads and other congregational members who sat with the children to provide an extra hand and loving support.

Adult Education: a.k.a. Percolate (Sunday Morning @ 8:30)

Submitted by Nancy Morlock-Hollins

It is appropriate to begin this end of year report with a tribute to our founder, the Reverend Bob Howard, who passed away in December. Bob pushed us to read and discuss important books by important authors. All of his submissions were well researched and well documented. The books pushed our understanding and expanded ways of thinking about our faith. This high standard stuck, because to this day we continue to read books that cause us to think and grow.

This year, after wrapping up Traveling Mercies by Ann Lamont, we started The First Paul – Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservatory Icon by John Dominic Crossan and Marcus Borg. We learned to distinguish books written by the genuine radical Paul and those written by faithful members of "Paul's school." As usual, Crossan and Borg put everything in context. They show Paul as following the way of Jesus, rather than the way of the Roman Empire and how that informs the meaning of his ministry.

Each year before the James White Lectureship Series, we read something by the guest speaker. This year's speaker was Peter Rollins and we read The Orthodox Heretic. This is a narrative book that looks at parables. It taught us to look once again at the context of the parable and look to deeper, relevant meanings rather than the easy, traditional ones. Peter Rollins told us, "These parables do not seek to change our minds but rather to change our hearts." They did indeed do that!

The last book this year that we've tackled is Amy-Jill Levine's The Misunderstood Jew – The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus. Our discussions have been permeated with, "Why didn't I know that?" It continues to be a thought-provoking book, with much interfaith dialogue. It has caused us to examine our stereotypes and move beyond them.

As a rule, we start around 8:30 on Sunday morning. We read and briefly discuss the day's scripture; we read a UCC daily devotional and then start the book. All are welcome, even if you aren't caught up on the reading. The coffee's perkin' and there's always room around the table.

Adult Faith Formation - Beyond Sunday Morning

The following studies were offered during 2017:

In March, Sister Ayya Dhammadhira offered a 6-week course on “*From Fear to Freedom.*” This course focused on the dynamic of fear as it is experienced by us individually and collectively.

In April, the film “*Gender Revolution: A Journey with Katie Couric*” was shown at VG

In May, Sister Ayya Dhammadhira led a 5-week course on “*Who Am I?*” This class explored identity in order to discover what our essential nature is.

In June, Pastor Clare began a Tuesday evening group on *Contemplative Conversations.*

In October, a great mystical Sufi Poet Rumi’s Birthday Program was led by Carla Vogel and Barry Nienstadt. This was an interfaith celebration through poems, songs, stories, and dancing.

In October, a book study with High Plains UU on *Embracing Interfaith Cooperation* was co-led by Pastor Dana Lightsey and Pastor Clare.

ACCEPTANCE WHICH INCLUDES RESPECT AND WELCOMING

MEMBERSHIP/COVENANTAL PARTNERS

Included in the Church Clerk’s report.

IN MEMORIAM

Joanie Adams King (June 4, 1939 – April 30, 2017)

Memorial service was held at Vista Grande Community UCC on May 4, 2017 with the Rev. Clare Twomey officiating.

Joanie’s mom and dad and the rest of her family were from Pennsylvania. Her dad was sent to Little Rock, Arkansas, to be a minister at the Presbyterian Church there and that’s where Joanie and her brother Dan were born. They grew up during the turbulent Civil Rights Era and graduated from the historic Little Rock High School. Her brother also became a Presbyterian minister and traveled to Colorado. Joanie later followed with her two kids where she met Richard in 1973.

Joanie’s dad and brother may have had the formal training to become ministers, but it is something that Joanie did all her life naturally. When she and Richard got married they started taking care of everyone else (including newcomers to the neighborhood in 1978, the Gunnings!) a lot of the time to the detriment of themselves. They attended the churches that would best support their family members but when they had the opportunity to choose a church for themselves, they chose to become members of VGCC. Joanie joined the choir where she could use her beautiful voice to sing praises to the God she loved so much. They both became active in all aspects of church life and continued to be active until health issues kept them from attendance, but their hearts and prayers continued to be here until her death in April. We will miss you Joanie.

Robert Lothrop Howard “Rev Bob” (April 25, 1931 – Dec. 2, 2017)

Memorial service was held at Vista Grande Community UCC on Dec. 14, 2017
with the Rev. Clare Twomey officiating.

Bob Howard, member of Vista Grande Church, was born on April 25, 1931, and died on December 2, 2017. Bob was a consummate learner all his life. Graduating from Andover Newton Seminary, he became a minister in the United Church of Christ at the beginning of the formation of the church. Bob served in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, and Colorado before retiring in 1997.

Bob continued to serve the church, and to minister, in retirement. He was well known for his extensive correspondence with persons all over the globe; his notes and letters were treasured for their support and insight. He served Vista Grande for many years, teaching the adult Sunday morning class, tending to the garden, supporting the mission work, the children’s activities and lending his experience, wisdom and humor to all fortunate enough to have any interaction with him.

Bob was married to Evelyn Brown in 1966 until her death in 2015. He leaves a son, Jeremy Ian Howard.

Bob is missed by his family, his church family, and persons far and wide. He was unique in his generosity of spirit, of time, of experience, in his gentle leadership, and his Zen like teaching.

Member in Discernment – Crystal Karr

In the United Church of Christ, ministerial formation and authorization are overseen by Committees on Ministry in local Associations. It is important for those who are exploring God's call to partner early with their home congregation and a local Committee on Ministry. Once an individual is in covenant with a local church and a Committee on Ministry, the person is designated by the Association to be a **Member in Discernment**.

Crystal Karr graduated from Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, MO in 2010. She served two churches under the United Methodist Church appointments. After much personal discernment, Crystal wanted to explore the United Church of Christ.

Crystal Karr partnered with Vista Grande Community Church in the fall of 2015 and became a member in discernment with the Southeastern Association on June 30, 2016. This year, Crystal has preached at Vista Grande and other UCC churches in our association. She was the facilitator for the Women’s Retreat, *Scandalous and Sacred: Honoring Our Scandalous and Sacred Selves*. We explored the five women from The Genealogy of Jesus as written in Matthew 1:1-17.

Crystal serves on Vista Grande’s Faith Formation and Worship Ministry Teams. We continue to live the ministerial covenant with Crystal Karr. She works closely with the local discernment team.

Open and Affirming (ONA)

Opening and Affirming (ONA) Statement

(Approved by Vista Grande Community Church Steering Committee – September 15, 2009)

(Adopted by the congregation – Oct. 25, 2009)

Whereas, we understand that God created humanity in a variety of forms and that God called this diversity “good,”

Whereas, we observe that Jesus showed no partiality, ministering to all people including the marginalized and outcast,

Whereas, as disciples of Jesus, we are called to restore justice wherever God’s creation is broken or divided,

Whereas, we acknowledge that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons have long been excluded, rejected, and dishonored by the church,

Whereas, we believe that God’s love is for all the people,

Therefore, 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 socioeconomic 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. “No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here.”

THE CENTER FOR PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

In 2004, Vista Grande affiliated with The Center for Progressive Christianity.

By calling ourselves progressive Christians, we mean we are Christians who...

1. Believe that following the path and teachings of Jesus can lead to an awareness and experience of the Sacred and the Oneness and Unity of all life;
2. Affirm that the teachings of Jesus provide but one of many ways to experience the Sacredness and Oneness of life, and that we can draw from diverse sources of wisdom in our spiritual journey;
3. Seek community that is inclusive of ALL people, including but not limited to:
 - Conventional Christians and questioning skeptics,
 - Believers and agnostics,
 - Women and men,
 - Those of all sexual orientations and gender identities,
 - Those of all classes and abilities;
4. Know that the way we behave towards one another is the fullest expression of what we believe;

5. Find grace in the search for understanding and believe there is more value in questioning than in absolutes;
6. Strive for peace and justice among all people;
7. Strive to protect and restore the integrity of our Earth;
8. Commit to a path of life-long learning, compassion, and selfless love.

Version 2011

Vista Grande became a *God is Still Speaking* church in 2004.

Learn more by visiting these websites: www.progressivechristianity.org; www.ucc.org

CARING RELATIONSHIPS – FAMILY, CHILDREN, COMMUNITY, FRIENDSHIP

MISSION MINISTRY

Submitted by Nancy Morlock-Hollins and the Mission Coordinators

NEW Vision for Mission

Mission/Outreach is an integral part of VGCC ministries. We will pursue opportunities that are denominational and ecumenical, local and global, participatory and financial. Our mission and outreach will make a difference - empowering recipients, and inspiring givers to act in the spirit of Christ; exemplifying The Three Great Loves: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation.

Our Missions for 2017 were Cheyenne Village, Family Promise, Inside-Out Youth Services, Los Pobres, One Nation Walking Together, and the UCC's 5 for 5.

Cheyenne Village – Colorado Springs (submitted by Judy Druelinger)

Cheyenne Village is a local non-profit that helps support developmentally challenged adults in the Colorado Springs community. It helps with housing, activities, education, counseling, grocery shopping, medication supervision, transportation and the general monitoring of this often overlooked and forgotten group of people.

Family Promise (submitted by Donna Bristow)

Family Promise is a support network of churches providing homeless families with children, a safe, homelike shelter where the family can stay together and share meals, as parents work with a case manager to acquire employment and affordable housing, regain independence and self-sufficiency. Vista Grande is a support network. We provide a meal on the weeks that Central United Methodist hosts the families.

In 2017, we helped out three times. We are always available to offer a meal when a host church needs extra hands. In 2017, the program provided 41 families with 20,307 meals and 7,080 bed nights in our community. Several of our members attended the 20th Annual Hope, Hearts, and Homes Luncheon in Feb.

Inside Out Youth Services (submitted by Nancy Morlock-Hollins)

2017 has been a year of changes for Inside-Out Youth Services. Under Mary Malia's leadership Inside-Out has been able to increase their staff to two and a half: an executive director, a program director and a half-time secretary. In the summer, Inside-Out had to move from their Tejon location and now resides at 223 N Wasatch. At the end of the summer Mary Malia resigned as executive director, and Mary Lou Makepeace took the position of interim director. In October their Ally-Up Breakfast was the most successful ever and Vista Grande filled two tables. Bob & Nancy continue to volunteer twice a month, usually at the adjunct facility at 21C.

Los Pobres (submitted by Faye Gallegos)

Our Los Pobres Mission Projects continued for 2017. As always we are collecting flour and oil. This year we did very well with other collection aids. The people of Vista Grande are a generous group:

- more interest and more visits from more persons
- the sale of Farm Fresh Eggs made more migrant workers clothing possible
- great work with One Nation sent men's clothing, family bedding, etc.
- heightened awareness (including our children) of our neighbors
- fantastic response to "Grocery Gift Card" December drive – 34 cards

A very loose guesstimate of what WE did:

- Made 15-18 visits which included 50-60 hours on site
- Traveled 1500-1700 miles
- Estimate value of in kind donations \$3500-\$4000.

Thank you EVERYONE for every dollar, hour, prayer, article, and thought given!

One Nation Walking Together (submitted by Judy Druelinger)

One Nation Walking Together is a local non-profit organization that strives to make a positive impact in the lives of Native Americans. A People that is greatly underserved and misrepresented. ONWT is an organization about People helping People. It serves Native Americans on 11 reservations in 7 states. It delivers goods that are requested by the various communities, and is not a "dump and run" organization.

One Nation is also working on a food sustainability program called Warrior Chickens. It is helping provide chicken coops and chickens to Native Americans, which will in turn will help people have fresh food supply in locations that are often far from grocery stores. This is just one of many programs that One Nation Walking Together is supporting and developing.

Our church was active in supporting the Standing Rock protest. We supplied many warm coats and other clothing to help protestors. We also provided a location for a very meaningful evening of song and dance by Shelly Morningsong and her husband. We also have sweatshirts and T-shirts for purchase in Fellowship hall. To learn more about this great organization is to visit their website: onenationwt.org This site has some great materials and videos.

The UCC 5 for 5 Missions

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) – supports international programs of health, education and agricultural development, relief, and refugee assistance.

Strengthen the Church - This offering grows the UCC's future by funding *The Stillspeaking Ministry*, new and renewing churches, youth and young adult ministries, and lay and pastoral leadership formation.

Neighbor in Need (NIN) - This offering supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

The Christmas Fund - Proceeds are used to provide gifts to clergy and lay employees in all stages of their lives and ministries to and through the UCC.

Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) - This was paid through our General Budget.

Unlike mission-directed giving, OCWM Basic Support allows the Conference to retain a staff that provides necessary guidance and resources to support the health and vitality of our churches. 78% remains in the RMC and 22% supports the National Office.

In October Vista Grande held a silent auction and raised \$2,200 for mission. A big thank you goes to Dana Zimmerman for spearheading that effort. In November, Jeannie Harrington and Nancy Morlock-Hollins agreed to co-chair the mission committee. The committee, under their leadership, met for the first time on Sunday, November 26th and agreed to meet on the last Sunday of each month. We chose our missions for 2018: Family Promise, Inside-Out Youth Services, Los Pobres, and One Nation Walking Together. We also decided to use the "Change for Change" monies for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

All our meetings are open. Please join us. If you would like to submit an item for the agenda, please see Jeannie or Nancy.

Funding missions:

Many folks pledged to our missions in 2017 and others gave to special appeals.

Our group mission results:

Financial Giving Directly to Mission Programs - \$10,369.82

In Kind Giving to Mission Programs - \$4,924.50

Mileage traveled (2,712.5 miles) to support Missions calculated - \$725.59

Volunteer Hours (343.5 hours) spent to support Mission Activity (@ \$24/hr) - \$8,244

Individual mission results:

In kind Giving to Other Mission Programs - \$429.01.

Total for Mission Giving: \$24,692.92

(This doesn't include the stewardship challenge! \$300 was dispersed through the weekly worship bulletin. The challenge was to double (or more) and use for a mission activity of your choice. Many local missions were supported through this challenge

FELLOWSHIP REPORT

Submitted by Carolyn Gunning

Our Women's Fellowship started out very hopeful in January with breakfast at the *Egg and I*. In February, we had our annual Friendship Dinner at the *Three Margarita's* and in March we continued our pattern of meeting the 3rd Saturday of the month alternating between breakfast and lunch when we had lunch at *La Baguette* on Chestnut Street. Breakfast was scheduled at the *Omelette Parlor* on April 8 but had to be cancelled. We suspended meetings for the summer because of too many other activities going on and were unable to meet again until October when the Women's Retreat was held on the 7th. Again we missed meeting in November but were able to hold our annual Brunch and Cookie Exchange at Roberta's home on December 9th.

In 2018, we are again hopeful that we can get back on track and continue our meetings every month! With that in mind, there will be a signup sheet at the church beginning, Sunday, January 7, for lunch at *Cheddars Restaurant* at 1140 Interquest Parkway at noon on January 20. All women of the church are welcome-come join us!

THE WIDER CHURCH

Submitted by Donna Bristow

Vista Grande was well represented at Wider Church activities during 2017.

In January, the Southeastern Association held an Ecclesiastical Council (EC) to examine Jeffrey Dodson for ordination. Donna, Dave, Clare, and Crystal attended the EC. Jeffrey was ordained on February 26.

Congregations Alive 3 was held at First Plymouth UCC in Englewood, CO on Feb 2-4. Keynote speaker was Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, the UCC General Minister and President. Donna and Dave Bristow, Judy Druelinger, Crystal Karr, Nancy Morlock-Hollins, and Clare Twomey attended.

In February, the Southeastern Association installed Rev. Karen Howe as pastor and teacher of First Congregational in Pueblo. Pastor Clare and Donna attended.

In April, the Southeastern Association installed Rev. Anne Cabbage as pastor and teacher of Broadmoor Community Church. Pastor Clare, Jim Price, Faye Gallegos, Deborah Tinsley, Nancy and Bob Hollins attended.

In May, Pastor Clare attended the Evangelical Lutheran Annual Meeting representing and presenting on behalf of Rev. Sue Artt, our Conference Minister.

The Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration with the theme, *Beloved Community. Believing Hope. Embodied Action*, was held at the Larimer County Community College, Cheyenne WY on June 8 – 11, 2017. Our voting delegates were Dave and Donna. Pastor Clare also attended.

June 30 to July 4 was the National UCC General Synod in Baltimore. The theme was *Make Glad*. Dave Bristow was a voting delegate representing the Southeastern Association of the Rocky Mountain Conference. Donna Bristow, Pastor Clare, and Dana Zimmerman attended as well.

In July, The Church in the Wildwood hosted the workshop on *How to Use Online Tools to Engage with the World*. It was sponsored by The Southeastern Association and led by Cory Kibler the Communications Director of the Rocky Mountain Conference. Dave, Donna, and Deborah Tinsley attended.

In September, the Southeastern Association installed Rev. Gaye Bosley-Mitchell as pastor and teacher

of Community Congregational of Manitou Springs. Pastor Clare was invited to preach.

On October 14, 2017, the Southeastern Association Annual Gathering was held at Black Forest Community UCC. The theme was *Be The Church...So That!* Our keynote speaker was the new Associate Conference Minister, Rev. Erin Gilmore. Our voting delegates were Dana Zimmerman, Jacque Bechthold-Blueitt, and Dave B. Pastor Clare and Donna Bristow also attended. Donna shared the Dr Seuss style poem written by Lori Gardner on how we were continuing to Celebrate Diversity.

Presentation for SEA Oct 14, 2017

We Celebrate Diversity ... SO THAT we may be A Just World for All.

Written by Lori Gardner; Based on Green Eggs and Ham

We are VGCC! VGCC are We!

Do you know VGCC?

Read about us and you'll see
you will love VGCC!

Do you know VGCC?

Social justice is our plea!

Our breakfast made the local news. Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Jews,
And Unitarians gathered here in love and support without fear.

Do you know VGCC?

We show kindness and walk humbly!

Sharing our differences, accepting all. Learning, listening to the call.

Music and Dancing with our friends from One Nation.

Marching with High Plains in PRIDE Celebration.

Discussing "Embracing Interfaith Cooperation"

Do you know VGCC?

You are welcome here unconditionally.

Inside Out, an ongoing mission, showing a film on Gender Revolution.

Thirsty on Thursday? Theology on Tap

with Pastors Clare and Dana ready to rap.

Celebrating the poet Rumi, Discussions led by guest Ayya D.

Do you know VGCC?

A caring, working community.

With all we do you must agree

The place to be is VGCC!

2017 Participants on Conference and Association Teams:

Donna Bristow served as the chairperson of the Committee on Ministry (COM) and was the Moderator for the Southeastern Association until she termed off in October. Pastor Clare serves on the Committee on Ministry and is the new SEA Moderator. Donna is also on the Planning Team for Congregations Alive 4 to be held in Feb. 7-9, 2019. Dave Bristow served on the search committee for the new Associate Conference Minister. Rev. Erin Gilmore was called to fill that position.

Lori Gardner attended the Fall Youth Retreat at La Foret as church liaison for Eva Baptist, Evelyn Cherney, and Anna Kolm.

Dana Zimmerman serves on the Southeastern Association Executive Team as Treasurer.

GRANT WRITING

Submitted by Deborah Tinsley

Least anyone wonder if receiving a \$7,000 grant has made any impact on our church, here is a very brief summary of what the *Renewing or New Church Start* grant, received in January of 2017, has enabled us to achieve in the last year:

We entered a coaching relationship with Center for Progressive Renewal: The Coaching relationship gives ministry leaders “legs on the ground” and constructive companionship, accountability and resourcing support, and it is required of grant recipients through the duration of the grant.

VG’s Coach was instrumental in our Mission Team developing a hands-on, relational mission philosophy that immediately impacted our mission outreach. The Coach was a cohort in the yearlong collaboration with High Plains Unitarian Universalists (HP) by encouraging and prompting Vista Grande to define its values and to strengthen its identity. Along with strengthening our identity, the Coach suggested rewriting our bylaws to reflect our open and inclusive theology that goes beyond previously held concepts of ‘membership’. The Coach has continued to encourage VG to solidify its ‘brand’ as a progressive, inclusive voice, the place for individuals to gather over shared values and investigate the important issues facing our community of Colorado Springs, and to boldly step into a leadership role on those issues.

Another important benefit of being in the coaching relationship is that our Pastor is able to take five on-line training courses through CASA (Congregational Assessment Support and Advancement) on such topics as leadership, worship, and more; without the grant, these courses would have been prohibitively expensive.

We used a loan from the grant to execute a fundraiser, which resulted in \$2,200 additional funds for our mission work.

A second loan, to kick-start the purchase of King Soopers gift cards which pay a rebate to VG, resulted in continual income for VG from the congregation’s member’s use of the cards.

From the grant, VG purchased educational materials for a joint class with members from our church and from High Plains Unitarian Universalists to study the concept of interfaith collaboration.

VG used money from the grant to increase our visibility in the community by purchasing banners and other materials.

The grant helped upgrade out of date office equipment with the purchase of a new laptop.

A second grant, in support of our Minister’s annuity on a three year decreasing scale, was awarded to VG as well. This grant expires in 2019; in 2020 VG will take responsibility for these funds, anticipated to be about \$8,000.

It is because of our strong relationship with our Southeastern Association, with the Rocky Mountain Conference, and with the National Church that we were able to receive these grants. The grants form a covenant between all these groups; on our side of the covenant is a *commitment in terms of our continuing our strong relationships with the Association, Conference and National offices*. There are further requirements that VG agreed to as well: *Become a 5 for 5 congregation*; historically, we have been a strong supporter of our 5 for 5 denominational missions, and VG was recognized for this in 2017 by the National office. We are required to be an *Open and Affirming* church, and again, this is

in our rear view mirror rather than ahead of us, and is a commitment that VG takes to heart. We are required to run the *White Privilege Curriculum*; not only did we run the five week program, but the participants were so engaged that it ran thirteen weeks, and ended with a panel discussion presented during worship. We are to live into a *Multi-Racial Multi-Cultural Community*, and the study materials for this program will come from the grant when this is offered in 2018. Finally, we are required to work toward making our congregation and facility *Accessible to All*; again, this is a goal partially achieved, and one on which we continue to work.

The short list of how VG has utilized this grant was to discover and research ways to be more involved with interfaith collaborations, more involved and 'hands on' in the community, strengthen our mission outreach, and be more visible as a resource for the community of Colorado Springs. But VG is not satisfied with what we have done, looking forward to the next year for ways to increase our outreach on Social media, upgrading our website, researching other examples of successful interfaith collaborations, such as Interfaith Centers in Omaha and Minneapolis, upgrading our sound system for the hearing challenged, continue to pursue a *Just Peace* designation, and to answer a question put forth by member Kathy Romberg in 2017: How would Colorado Springs look, feel, and live differently if VG achieves any impact with our mission outreach?

VG is viewed by the Conference and National offices very much as "the little church that could"; their faith in us, in our abilities and our vision of a more just and inclusive future, is supported by the awarding of these grants. However, grants alone do not accomplish goals; it is our faith in ourselves, our daring to envision a community grounded in peace and justice, which will continue to move us to greater achievements. Whoever you are, where ever you are on life's journey, you are invited into the process.

COMMUNICATION AND ADVERTISING

Submitted by Donna Bristow

Mid 2017, we discontinued advertising our Sunday worship in The Independent. We hoped to be able to use other avenues.

Our bi-monthly newsletter, *Vista Views*, was available through our website and paper copy. This gave the option for our congregants to read the Vista Grande's news and support going green with less paper and printing costs. Communication to the congregation was also made through our weekly e-blast and the printed announcement sheet in the weekly bulletin. Pastor Clare began a weekly Pastor's Blurb which added to the anticipation of opening that weekly e-mail!

Our outdoor sign and Facebook is also a way we advertise. Thanks to Nancy Morlock-Hollins for keeping this updated. Check out the bulletin board on the easel in Fellowship Hall. It continually has a new flyer. Also, check out the large calendar in the entry way for upcoming meetings and activities.

Communication is two-fold. If you have something to share or a suggestion to be made, pass it on. If you want to keep up with what's going on at Vista Grande, read the various means of communication made available to you.

Please let us know if you have any ideas to expose us in the community!! Our website is www.vgcc.org and Vista Grande is also on Facebook! Our e-mail address is vgcc.ucc@att.net

FACILITIES TASK FORCE

Submitted by Jan Morgan

The following tasks were completed during the past year:

- Solar lights outside the front door were installed.
- Concrete was shaved down at the front entry area to prevent tripping injuries.
- The vandalized art piece was removed from the south lawn.
- Brackets for banners were installed.
- Numerous outdoor clean up and weed control days were scheduled.

Thanks to all the volunteers this past year who helped us maintain our property and landscape.

Lawn maintenance is completed by our church volunteers. Thanks to Jerry Moore and Carolyn Gunning. It's also been noted that Pastor Clare likes to run the riding mower too.

Snow removal for the parking lot is contracted, however, volunteers keep the sidewalk and church entryway clear.

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Submitted by John Tinsley

Year	# Pledges	Pledged		Pledged Collected		Non Pledged Collected		
		Operating	Mission	Operating	Mission	Operating	Mission	Plate
2017	26 ¹	61,951	7,504	61,906	5,764	15,491	375	2,942.80
2018	20 ²	60,890	11,929	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note: 1. Final tally at end of year
2. Tally at beginning of year

TREASURER'S REPORT
Submitted by Dawn Bechthold-Blueitt

Part 1 – General Fund

	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget (Proposed 1/21/17)
Income			
Plate	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,942.80	\$ 2,500.00
Pledged	\$ 59,749.00	\$ 61,906.00	\$ 60,890.00
Non-Pledged	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 15,491.00	\$ 4,000.00
South Hall Rent	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 30,000.00
Other	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 770.00	\$ 1,500.00
Fundraisers		\$ 3,308.98	\$ 5,000.00
Total	\$ 96,749.00	\$ 114,418.78	\$ 103,890.00

	2017 Budget	2017 Actual	2018 Budget Proposed 1/21/18
Expenses			
Faith Formation	\$ 300.00	\$ 207.84	\$ 400.00
Banking/Finance	\$ 25.00	\$ 54.59	\$ 655.00
Membership	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 1,672.77	\$ 1,704.00
Mission	\$ 2,100.00	\$ 2,077.22	\$ 2,500.00
Office & General	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,194.88	\$ 2,540.00
Programs	\$ 150.00	\$ 89.96	\$ 100.00
Property	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 17,112.10	\$ 15,750.00
Worship	\$ 350.00	\$ 457.35	\$ 350.00
Payroll	\$ 77,000.00	\$ 79,095.77	\$ 79,052.00
Total	\$ 100,425.00	\$ 102,962.48	\$ 103,051.00
Income vs Expenses	\$ (3,676.00)	\$ 11,456.30	\$ 839.00

Part 2 – Bank Account and United Church Funds

Account	30 December 2016	31 December 2017
Checking	\$ 12,043.77	\$ 34,002.78
United Church Funds	\$ 32,016.54	\$ 36,914.74

Part 3 – Restricted Funds – Missions & Special Projects

Contributions to specific missions and special projects were submitted directly to that fund after it was received and the balances carry over from year to year.

RESTRICTED ACCOUNT	BALANCE 1 JAN 2017	FUNDS RECEIVED 2017	FUNDS PAID 2017	BALANCE 31 DEC 2017
Women's Retreat	74.58	335.00	296.45	113.13
Prayer Shawl	446.54	0	0	446.54
Pastor's Discretionary	305.04	943.05	840.00	408.09
Mission/Outreach	0	8,066.82	7,159.28	907.54
Change For Change	13.14	78.21	0	91.35
NCS-U Grant	0	7,200.00	3,196.04	4,003.96
Misc Special	0	758.08	758.08	0
Youth	972.74	0	299.00	673.74
Choir-Special	819.23	345.00	0	1,164.23
Total	2,631.27	17,726.16	12,548.85	7,808.58

Mission giving continues to be a strong indicator of the VGCC commitment to serving others. Our giving supports a variety of social causes as listed below. The starred (*) items in the following list receive non-cash donations in addition to monetary contributions.

	Sent in 2017	Sent Jan 2018
Family Promise*	560.00	
One Great Hour of Sharing	1985.82	335.00
Los Pobres*	832.00	
Inside – Out Youth Services*	608.00	100.00
Strengthen the Church	528.00	176.00
Cheyenne Village	612.00	
Neighbors in Need	450.00	150.00
One Nation Walking Together*	896.00	
The Christmas Fund	611.00	852.00

VGCC continues to be a United Church of Christ “5 for 5” congregation. We budgeted \$2,000 for Our Churches Wider Mission in addition to the four UCC missions; One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and The Christmas Fund.

Congregational Annual Meeting

January 29, 2017

Moderator Erin Elkaim called the meeting to order at 11:16 a.m. Quorum was established with 30 in attendance.

Annual Report for 2016 was passed out to all.

Erin Elkaim presented the Annual Report and called attention to page 21 which was our Missions from last year. The total monetary donation for 2016 Missions were \$7,286.25. She reminded everyone to be sure to fill out the paperwork for volunteer hours and give them to Donna Bristow.

Pastor Clare Twomey spoke briefly about the budget and how to become a completely sustainable congregation. In-kind donations of about \$1,000; this is not reflected in the budget. Also, 260 hours have been volunteered to clean and keep up the church inside and out.

Nominations for Vacant Steering committee positions were received with the following people being voted into office:

Treasurer: Dawn Bechthold-Blueitt

Clerk: Deborah Tinsley

Member at Large #1: Jim Price

Two positions open: Member at Large #2 and/or Financial Secretary

Treasurer Nancy Morlock-Hollins explained the 2016 deficit and the 2017 deficit seen on pages 20-21. She also made mention to becoming a sustainable congregation, working in a deficit budget does not allow us to do so.

Erin Elkaim asked for fundraising ideas from the congregation. Several ideas were posed including: King Soopers cards; concert series; annual festival (diversifest); volunteer expertise for paid services; change by-laws to allow for more activities within the church; fish fry; and wedding committee. Pastor Clare made mention to the fact that we need to be aware of our time and commitment; if the amount raised is not worth the time put in, then we should not continue with that particular fundraiser. She also simply stated that maybe we need to go back and think about what we have pledged, and ask ourselves if we can afford a little bit more.

Motion to approve the 2017 Budget as printed in the Annual Report was passed with several nay's. (Motion to approve the 2016 budget was made by Deb Tinsley and 2nd by Jim Price)

Submitted by Dawn Bechthold-Blueitt, VGCC Secretary