

The Vista Views

Easter/Spring 2018 by Rev Clare Twomey

Dry...it is so dry for this time of year. Usually in March, we are alternating between slogging in the slush and anticipating the blooming of spring flowers, the hint of green in open spaces and on the tips of branches. This year I'm listening to the reports of a fire south of the city and precautions on the news as we begin spring with an early wildfire season. Dry conditions during the Lenten season and Holy Week make for a good metaphor, but other than that it is a bit disconcerting. It's frustrating to be looking for the brilliance of new growth and possibilities when the weather gives us a sense of foreboding. At least this morning there was there the scent of ozone in the air and a promise of some kind of moisture this week...

The greening that is supposed to happen this time of year is something, I would think, we all expect. The promise of new life, the smell of grass, the emergence of crocus and daffodils insisting that spring is at hand. I for one have always looked forward to this time of year. Which is why I found it so confounding, when years ago, a colleague of mine shared that he hated, yes hated spring. I was in my late twenties, working in a hospital psychiatry department with teens and families. It was my first year there and we had just had a hideously cold, damp and snowy winter. As if overnight, the weather changed and everything popped! On our way to lunch one day, most of us were practically skipping we were so excited about the sights and smells of spring, finally arrived. But not Jim. He was moody, distracted and looked like he was going to lash out at anyone who spoke to him. Not to be deterred as 'know it all therapists', we asked him what was wrong. He bluntly stated, "I hate spring". We started to joke with him, "How can anyone hate spring especially after the kind of winter we have had?!" It was then, before we could go too far with our teasing, that he shared that he suffered with depression. While he could get most of it under control, he still had a very difficult go of it, especially during this time of year when everyone else seemed to be in a good mood. Spring, he explained, was the time of year when everyone was 'supposed' to be happy and grateful and joyous. He found it so overwhelming because he felt anything but those things. He preferred winter to spring, cloudy days to sunny one, and cold, wet weather to warm and dry simply because, on those days, no one questioned why he was in a crappy mood. It was on those days that he didn't feel different from anyone else. He felt normal and safe.

While I heard what Jim said I never really understood it? After all, I had also been diagnosed with depression but never experienced what he had shared. Spring had always meant, and still does, a renewal, a rebirth, a resurrection of all that had died or gone dormant in the winter months. It held possibilities and optimism. But not for Jim. For him it held despair and rejection, the feeling of being misunderstood and the experience of inauthenticity. It was a very painful time for him.

(Continued on page 3.)

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Special points of interest:

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



Core Purpose:

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

Our Core Values:

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

Check the website often for news and events!

Vista Grande Community UCC is an Open and Affirming Church.

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

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

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**.

2018 Executive 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

Our Staff

Pastor—Rev Clare Twomey

Music Director—David Hudson

Office Administrator—Donna Bristow

Nursery Attendant—Robin

Easter/Spring 2018 (continued from page 1.)



And every spring, as I watch the daffodils and crocus push through a dry or wet earth, I think of him.

So, here I am again, thinking of Jim and his baffling experience of what should be a welcomed time of celebration and new life. It reminds me that we all carry an idea of how we think we should be acting or at least how we should be seen in the world. Our Lenten journey through the vestiges of shame, reminded us that we carry so much in our hearts and in our beings. We hold things that we believe would be mis-understood or made fun of.

We keep those things to ourselves which we fear others would mock, or ignore or dismiss. And we tend to make light of another's experience if it doesn't sound like our own or if our interpretation of that experience is something altogether different.

Perhaps the potential for new life, new growth, and new beginnings then, doesn't come from us all being able to completely understand each other, or perceive one another perfectly. Perhaps the brilliance of our growth, our resurrection one might say, is celebrating, that while we can't possibly understand one another completely, "get each other", we can still be with one another in community. We can be together with all our complexities, our issues, our moods, our varying experiences and perceptions, and still celebrate and embrace our whole imperfect selves. Because if we can do that, then we really do understand the meaning of discipleship, of community, of diversity. Then we really are the embodiment of Resurrection—each of us lifting one another up, reaching for the potential for growth and new life.

Worship

Sermon titles and themes:

- April 8 The courageous acts of Thomas---courage, doubt, faith
- April 15 Food as Sacrament---communion, nourishment, fulfillment
- April 22 Love Your Mother---Earth Day
- April 29 Love, Period.---Love
- May 6 You've Got a Friend---friendship, companionship
Guest Speaker during Fellowship Hour (see page 9)
- May 13 Prayer as Relationship---prayer
- May 20 Holy S#%\$&@!! (Spirit--what did you think I meant?)---
Holy Spirit, Pentecost
- May 27 Mystery, Riddle, Enigma---Mystery, questions, faith, trust



Youth Documentary Academy *by Clare Twomey*



About nine months ago a friend of mine, Kathy Stults who has been a driving force of the Rocky Mountain Women's Film Institute, asked if Vista Grande would be interested in screening some of the documentary films that young people from around the Pikes Peaks region had created. These young men and women are chosen from a number of applicants and are mentored extensively by film maker Tom Sheppard through the Youth Documentary Academy (YDA).

The films reflected those personal issues and experiences these teens had but also touched on the concerns that most of our youth deal with today: mental illness, PTSD, suicide, immigration, race, LGBTQIA, etc. They are exceptionally made and produced films.

This past March we were able to screen three of these films and have the films makers present to answer questions and see their experiences. The films included one in which a sibling of the films maker had attempted suicide. This film gained national acclaim and was awarded an Emmy. Another was about living with the diagnosis of autism and the social and familial implications. The third film focused on what it means to be a queer youth in this world and included interviews with a number of folks in various stages of coming out.

I cannot describe the professionalism demonstrated in these films and with the young people themselves. But even more, the authenticity of their work and their willingness to put themselves out there, as it were, speaks volumes about their wisdom and their courage. It is our intention to have these screenings every other month, **the next being May 6**. We have committed ourselves to being a place where young voices are heard and taken seriously. I am pleased that High Plains has joined with us in this endeavor to provide a forum for these films and an opportunity for all of us to be in conversation with these beautiful young voices! Please, join us next time and be prepared to be astonished by their talents and their hearts.

Looking Ahead! Women's Retreat – Saturday, September 8 at La Foret.

The location is secured. Now a few folks are working on a workshop facilitator and other details that will be passed on as they are finalized.

La Foret is our UCC camp almost in our backyard – in Black Forest. It's a beautiful camp setting that has opportunity for meditation, reflection, and community building.

Mark your calendars for this fall event.

Faith Formation

Kids' Faith Formation



**Family Faith Formation
Saturday May 19 at 9:30 a.m.**

Theme: Pentecost

Heifer International REPORT

The children enjoyed their Family Faith Formation on Sat. March 10. We learned about Heifer International, made butter from cream, completed a farmland scene with animals that Heifer provides families, and made animal puppets.

The children chose a Cow, Pig, Chickens, and Goat to learn about. They presented their animals on Sunday March 18 and asked the congregation to help them purchase these animals for families to learn how to provide for their families. Thanks kids for your wonderful presentation. There will be families who will benefit from our support of Heifer International.

Our donations allowed us to purchase ½ goat, ½ pig, 3 flocks of chickens, and 4 shares of a cow. As Heifer was running a doubling incentive, we actually ended up with a goat, a pig, 6 flocks of chickens, a great donation toward a cow, and a donation toward clean water.

Adult Faith Formation “Percolate”

In February our Percolate group finished The Misunderstood Jew by Amy Jill Levine and discussed The Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly. We then started Original Blessing by Mat-



thew Fox. This book contrasts Fall-Redemption theology with Creation spirituality. So many moments in discussing this book have been accompanied with “Oh that’s why our society (ourselves) believe that way!!! It does indeed dovetail with our work on becoming a Just Peace church. It is also the kind of book that permits open discussion at any point in it. So even if you have not read all the previous material, you will be able to participate.

We meet each Sunday at about 8:30 A.M and the coffee will be ready!

Mission

As we began 2018, our Mission Ministry team wrote our amended Vision:

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 3 Great Loves: Love of Neighbor; Love of Children; Love of Creation.

Mission Action Team

(Jeannie Harrington and Nancy Morlock-Hollins, Co-Chairs)



Our Mission Action Team has been active! In February several of us, along with other Covenantal Partners, attended the **Family Promise** fundraiser luncheon-inspirational speakers and a silent auction! Our congregation also supported two meals for families in the program. Our kids helped make blankets for the kids at **Los Pobres**. Faye Gallegos (our chair for our Los Pobres mission) also announced “the chickens are laying”! Parts of the cost of the organic eggs provided by Faye’s daughter go to helping out **Los Pobres**.

Recently our worship service has included a “Reflection Moment”. Our Mission Action Team has been given permission to use the 2nd and 4th Sundays for a Mission Reflection. We have been able to raise awareness of missions through these short talks along with our information tables.

Please join us! We meet after church on the last Sunday of the month.

Family Promise

Ten folks from Vista Grande attended the 21st Annual Hope, Hearts, and Homes Luncheon and Silent Auction on Feb 25. This fundraiser surpassed the budgeted hope for revenue. It was a great day indeed. Upcoming fundraisers include: a Family Promise Walk on Sunday September 16. This will help make this mission well-known in downtown Colorado Springs. The 2019 Hope, Hearts, and Homes Luncheon will be held on Sunday, Feb 24. As these events come closer, more information will be shared.

Los Pobres

Faye continues to go to Los Pobres located about 45 minutes east of Pueblo to deliver our “in kind” gifts. The Vista Grande children worked on making “tied knot” blankets and Faye delivered those to Los Pobres to be given to the children of migrant workers. Sister Nancy was very happy to receive these gifts for the children.



One Great Hour of Sharing Resources 2018 Theme – More than we can imagine.

It is easy to feel overwhelmed when we look at all the areas of need in God's world: there is hunger, sickness, and injustice in so many communities. It is easy to feel there is nothing we can do to help. We can feel trapped by hopelessness and fear that what little we can do—won't have an impact. But there is hope! Better yet: we are that hope!

As the Apostle Paul writes, "by the power at work within us," God is able to "accomplish abundantly more than we can ask or imagine" (Ephesians 3:20). "We are the agents of transformation that God uses to transfigure this world" (Archbishop Desmond Tutu). Wishing and dreaming of a better world means nothing if we don't realize that God gives us community to practice love and compassion. We cannot only care for ourselves, but we must also care about those around us, both near and far. Our gifts become part of a loving legacy in ways we can't foresee. Our gifts become blessings to people we don't know and blesses in ways we can't expect. We can make a difference beyond what we can imagine.

One Great Hour of Sharing® is the Lenten/Easter Offering of the United Church of Christ that supports disaster, refugee, and development activities.

Go to http://www.ucc.org/oghs_stories to read stories of how OGHS is working in our world. These stories are from March 2018.

UCC calls for work teams for Puerto Rico hurricane recovery

March 27, 2018

UCC meets commitment to build 50 quake-proof homes in Nepal

March 27, 2018

\$212,000 grant will aid ecumenical hurricane recovery work in USVI

March 19, 2018

During the Observance of Women's History Month, Many Women Worldwide Hunger for Gender Equality.

March 15, 2018

Volunteers, hosts at UCC's new Harvey recovery site share skills, prayers

March 14, 2018

Membership



NEW! You may have noticed, we are using a new e-mail address.

It is admin@vgcc.org We'll be switching over as soon as it looks like we have the message out to members and ministry contacts. Make the change in your address book now.

April Birthdays

2	Nancy Morlock-Hollins
2	Liz Bliss
16	Donna Bristow
17	Carolyn Gunning
18	Jax Hyatt
19	Dawn Bechthold-Blueitt
26	Jim Price
26	Anna Kolm
30	Sami Solomon



May Birthdays

14	Randy Wright
19	Allyra Quarles
20	Jon Forshee
21	Kevin Gardner
22	Carol Wisely
23	June Bartyzel
27	Justin Hollins
27	Brason Spaniol
28	Jennifer Strombeck
28	Theo Pope
28	Eva Baptist
30	Dick Burbank

Anniversaries:

Apr 23	Erin and Jon Elkaim
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

Mar 31 and Apr 7	—Kelli and Tim Baptist
Apr 14 and 21	—Carolyn and Lyn Gunning
Apr 28 and May 5	—Carol and Phil Puterbaugh
May 12 and 19	—Donna and Dave Bristow
May 26 and June 2	—Erika Borboa and Jon Forshee
June 9 and 16	—Jackie and Jerry Moore



It's not hard to
make decisions →
once you know what
your VALUES are.
~ Roy E. Disney

VGCC's Guiding Values:

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

The Wider Church – The Rocky Mountain Conference and The Southeastern Association

April 22 at 3 p.m.—Installation of Rev Heather Haginduff at
First Congregational UCC in Colorado Springs.

June 7-9, 2018—The Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration
will be held at La Foret.

Oct 21, 2018—The Southeastern Association Annual Gathering will be held at
First Congregational UCC in Colorado Springs.
The annual gatherings will be held “close to home” this year.



On May 6th we will be welcoming a **guest presenter, Patrick Bentrott**, who will be offering some information about his work in Haiti during fellowship hour. Patrick is a former seminary classmate of Clare's, and is currently the executive director of FIDA (Foundation of International Development Assistance). This organization shares our mission quest to transform and be transformed by the relationships we have with those whom we serve. Below is a brief description of their philosophy and mission. Please plan on joining us for an informative and transformative presentation.

"FIDA has actively been promoting the productive agricultural cooperative model in Haiti since 1984. This model is viewed as the most appropriate when addressing the economic issues of poverty, and given a context wherein the country lacks political will, national infrastructure, and general security. FIDA, along with its working arm in Haiti, productive cooperatives Haiti (pCH), has received global acclaim for an effective adherence to the participatory approach when undertaking sustainable development activities, particularly among the rural poor.

"The founding principles are guided by a vision of addressing the root issues of poverty, namely to foster an environment of economic productivity appropriate to rural communities. Inherent in the mission is to promote the elements of self respect which is understood to be rooted in productivity, ownership and self reliance. The original constitution, created in 1980, cites the following ancient Chinese philosophy:

Go in search of your people

Love them

Plan with them

Begin with what they have

Build on what they know

But of the best leaders, when their task is accomplished

Their work is done

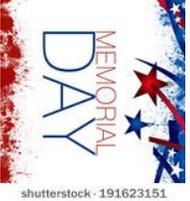
The people all remark

“We have done it ourselves”

April 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Sunday Schedule Easter Egg Hunt EASTER	2 5 pm Executive Council (cancelled)	3	4 9:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry 4:00 pm Choir	5	6	7
8 Sunday Schedule	9	10	11 8 am Men's Breakfast at Wade's Cafe 4:00 pm Choir	12	13	14
15 Sunday Schedule 11:15 am Worship Ministry Mtg	16	17	18 9:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry 4:00 pm Choir	19	20	21
22 Sunday Schedule Wider Church Event —Installation at FCC/COS		24	25 4:00 pm Choir	26	27 9 am Outdoor Church Cleanup	28
29 Sunday Schedule 11:15 am Mission Ministry Mtg	30				Sunday Schedule 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Worship 11:15 am Fellowship	

May 2018

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	3	4	5
Sunday Schedule Communion 11:15 am Guest Speaker 1 pm Youth Documentaries	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Sunday Schedule Mother's Day			9:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry 4:00 pm Choir			9:30 am Family Faith Formation
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Sunday Schedule Pentecost 			4:00 pm Choir			
27		29	30	31		
Sunday Schedule			4:00 pm Choir			



**VISTA GRANDE
COMMUNITY CHURCH**

United Church of Christ

Location: 5460 N Union Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO
Mailing: PO Box 26030 COS 80936
Phone: 719-599-3057
Email: admin@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.

Annual Celebration 2018 of the Rocky Mountain Conference

June 7-9, 2018 at La Foret

Registration is Now Open! www.rmccucc.org

This year's Annual Celebration (formerly known as the Annual Meeting) will span two nights instead of three.

New this year, the RMC is offering more free time at La Foret! So there will be a "Spiritual Retreat" Option! For just \$50 extra, you can stay at La Foret for an extra evening (from the end of the meeting on Saturday morning through Sunday morning), recharging however you like.

All meals included!

Here's the cost breakdown for each registration option:

- **Base Registration** (Thursday to Saturday): \$300
- **Offsite Registration** (includes all meals and programming): \$225
- **"Spiritual Retreat" Registration** (Base Reg. + extra evening): \$350

This year's event will feature inspiring moments of worship; a continued emphasis on relationships and connection; meaningful execution of our Conference business; and powerful inspiration from outside our Conference.