

Resting. Quiet. Stillness. Silence. By Clare Twomey

Can you believe that I am at a loss for words as I try to write this newsletter article? (I hear all the comments, by the way). But seriously, there are times when I find that words escape me. It usually happens when there is Spirit moment. You know, that moment when we are both compelled to speak and be quiet, or be still and yet move at the same time. Ok, to be honest, the Spirit part comes in the quiet and stillness and the talking and moving is me pushing back!

This time of year can do that to all of us. The longer nights and colder days remind us that we should be hunkering down and resting after a long year. You know, a comfortable chair, warm out sweats, hot chocolate and Christmas movies, or just a fireplace and a kitty on the lap. But the frenetic way we approach the holidays usually tips us, or dumps us in the other direction. Final exams and papers, gifts to buy, houses to clean, family returning and visiting, meals to cook, sidewalks to shovel, pageants to plan, cookies to bake and the list goes on. Even when we are still, our minds are usually racing with all the things we think we need to do.

Don't get me wrong, I think we are in good company. I figure Joseph was anxiously active trying to balance the needs of the family with the demands of the state, measuring the cost of travel vs. the compulsion to just take his chances by staying home. I can't imagine for a minute that Mary found any comfort on the back of a donkey, or anywhere else, at nine months pregnant—am I right moms? So where did they find peace, silence and stillness? Perhaps there is a part of me that still reverts back to the misguided romanticism of the stable under the tree. But in that memory that I see the heart of a mother bursting with the love of her child. The unspoken pride of a dad who as able to find a relatively safe place for his family to lay their heads after a long journey. I like to imagine there are moments after the shepherds leave and before the wise ones arrive, where there is peace. Deep, soul surrounding peace. There is a moment when I can completely relate to the desire to do nothing but curl up with family and critters and just stop.

Resting. Quiet. Stillness. Silence.

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Special points of interest:

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

Letter from Clare

Hello Dear Ones,

I am once again grateful for the opportunity to gather yesterday (Nov 18) and celebrate our abundance of generosity and hospitality for which Vista Grande is known. It was wonderful to spend time in good conversation with one another, celebrating our love and care for each other. Thank you for a wonderful celebration.

It doesn't surprise me that we celebrate Thanksgiving just prior to the season of Advent. It's as if the gratitude we have on Thanksgiving is designed to propel us into a season of then sharing those things, for which we are grateful, with our larger community. Harvest time has historically been a time of abundance and sharing. It makes sense for us to carry on that tradition.

This of course brings us to the giving we are asked to do to ensure the vision and mission of our Beloved Community. There are so many ways many of you give so that we can continue the work of our Creator in this place and time. We have been able to do so much with regard to those missions to which we are committed. And we have even been able to extend our relationships beyond what we do in house, as it were. Thank you for all you give and do. And thank you for your willingness to further commit to our vision and ministries.

There are numerous ways to get involved with Vista Grande: mission, social justice activities, facilities, worship, community life, faith formation... And we also need to pledge our financial support to the work we do. There is a temptation to just give from our tangible abundance--that is a place of comfort and extras-- thus 'tipping' instead of 'tithing'. But when we can embrace the reality that our abundance comes from the abundance of love and faith that God has for and in us, we can give from place of gratitude and not from a place of obligation or as an afterthought.

I invite to think and pray with intention about how you will give this year to support the work we all do, and to support the impact we make on those who need a safe and sacred spiritual home. I am so excited about what we have been able to do together as a community of faith. And I can't wait to see what the future has in store for this small but mighty church!

Our Staff

Pastor—Rev Clare Twomey Music Director—David Hudson

Seminary Student Intern—Mallory Everhart

Office Administrator—Donna Bristow

Nursery Attendant—Vacant

Pastor's Hours

The hours are flexible.

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

2018 Executive Committee consists of

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

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The demands of reality will find the family-us- soon enough, but for a minute, there is calm and peace.

This past year has been busy. It has been active, and emotionally draining. It has been successful and frustrating, hopeless and hope-filled. It has been gift and at times, curse. We are entering the season of Advent. A season that invites us into a time to rest, to be still and silent and to re-connect with our Beloved. I, personally, can get so excited and distracted by all that needs to be done and all the possibilities of what is to be-- to the extent that I forget to stop and rest. I'm thinking that it would be the best gift for all of us if we were to just stop for a time, put up our feet, close our eyes, and just listen for the still small voice that comes in the longer nights and colder days. This may be the best gift we can ever give ourselves. Time to be still.

Perhaps this will be the year I stop pushing back against the Spirit—that peace-filled Spirit that just wants to sit and visit and be quiet...

Happy Holy and Peace-Filled Days to You and Yours

Clare

The Season of Advent

Sunday December 2 - Joyful All Ye Nations Rise
Communion Sunday

Sunday December 9 - Every Heart Prepare Him Room

Sunday December 16 – All is Calm, All is Bright

Las Posadas Parade and Party - Celebrate the Journey to Bethlehem—(Guest Speaker—Rev Pat Dolin)

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. Mexican Feast during refreshments.

Friday December 21—6:30 p.m. -
Blue Christmas: A Worship for Those Who Need Comfort
Mallory leading

Sunday December 23 - A Thrill of Hope—Mallory preaching

Monday December 24 – Candlelight Service 5:30 p.m.

A service of Carols and Candlelight.

Sunday December 30 - The First Sunday after Christmas



Blue Christmas: A Worship Service for Those Who Need Comfort - December 21st at 6:30 p.m. We will gather together for an intimate worship on the longest night of the year to honor the pain which some of us feel during the holiday season. Reception to follow. Community event - open to the public.

Congregations Alive 4! Coming up – Feb. 7-9, 2019

Theme: A Just World for All

Congregations Alive 4 is a three-day event filled with powerful sermons, discussion, fellowship, and workshops led by local and national faith and justice leaders. Today, we are pleased to announce the fourth installment, planned for February 7—9, 2019 at First Plymouth Congregational Church in Englewood, CO.

The word most used to describe Congregations Alive! is "inspiring." Through our generative work, you will leave feeling re-energized by new ideas on how we can Be the Church!

This year, special guests include Rev. Traci Blackmon, Executive Minister of Justice & Witness Ministries—United Church of Christ; Rev. Amanda Henderson, Executive Director of the Interfaith Alliance; and Rev. Dr. Ivy Beckwith, Team Leader of Faith Formation Ministries—United Church of Christ. In addition, our own Rev. Chris Gilmore, Lead Pastor of Sixth Avenue UCC in Denver and Faith Nurture Associate for the Conference, will lead worship.

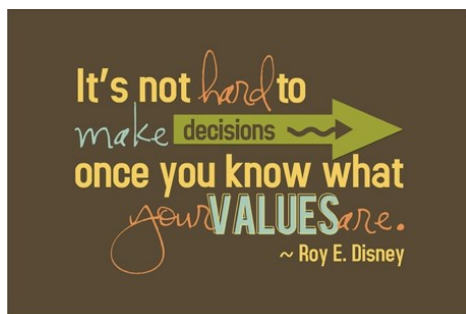
Congregations Alive! 4 is planned and will be facilitated by a group of dedicated educators, pastors, and lay-leaders from around the Rocky Mountain Conference. Registration will be open very soon, complete with more details about the event's workshops and schedule. The per-day cost is \$75, and it's \$150 for all three days.

However, there are multiple discounts available. If you register before January 1, 2019, you'll receive an early-bird discount of \$10 (one day) or \$25 (two or all three days). On top of this discount, you'll receive another \$10 discount if your church sends 2–3 members, and \$20 off if they send 4 or more.

We hope to see you there!

Register at www.rmccucc.org

(We'll have 4 or more attending so you'll save \$20 on the early bird registration.)



VGCC's Guiding Values:

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

Mallory (our Iliff School of Theology Student Intern) will be leading ...

Wednesday Night Advent Supper and Worship - Dec. 5, 12, 19

Wednesday Night Soup Supper and Worship - Join us each Wednesday in Advent for dinner at 5:30 p.m. and an intimate, contemplative time of worship at 6:30. Each week, we will be taking a deep dive into a secular holiday song and finding the spiritual message in it as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Sign-ups for soup and bread are on the board in the Fellowship Hall.

December 8, 9 a.m. -11a.m. At Vista Grande

The Empty Chair: Grief and the Holidays workshop co-hosted with Steve Fehl.

The Empty Chair: Grief and the Holidays - For those of us who have lost someone, the holidays can be extra difficult. Everyone is joyous and celebrating, but we are thinking about who isn't there: the empty chair. If you are grieving this holiday season, Steve Fehl and Mallory Everhart, grief educators, will provide a safe place to talk about your grief and offer some survival strategies for the coming season. Community event - open to the public.

Faith Formation



Adult Faith Formation "Percolate"

Percolate is reading and discussing Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God by theologian Kelly Brown Douglas. Douglas argues that the climate in our society that makes killing unarmed black people inevitable and even permissible has roots in the myth of Anglo-Saxon superiority and American exceptionalism.

This book, like others, has us saying, "Why didn't I know this." It is an extension of our study of White Privilege and will serve us well in living out our calling and commitment to being Just Peace individuals and a Just Peace church.

As usual all are welcome, whether or not you've read the book. We meet around 8:30 a.m. before the worship service and the coffee will be percolating.

Mission

Vision for Mission

Mission/Outreach is an integral part of VGCC ministries. We will pursue opportunities that are **reflective of Justice and Peace**, 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 in Action

We continue to be in relationship with our four local missions: Family Promise, Inside-Out Youth Services, Los Pobres and One Nation Walking Together. We are also continuing to sponsor Community Conversations with the Youth Documentary Academy. The next film will be shown on December 2nd at 1:00 p.m. This will be a continuation of their Impact Campaign. We also are on track to continue to be a 5 for 5 church of the United Church of Christ, with our financial contributions to: Our Church's Wider Mission, One Great Hour of Sharing, Strengthen the Church, Neighbors in Need, and the Christmas Fund.



Mission Action Team

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

Inside-Out Youth Services—Training has been taking place at Inside-Out for volunteers for Sources of Strength, Healthy Kids Symposium, and Trusted Adults. We are using these skills at the drop-in sessions on Mondays and Fridays and the Queer meals on Wednesdays. We are creating a safe LGBTIQ1A community where kids are accepted and loved.

Los Pobres - \$25 King Soopers Gift Cards

Dana has purchased these to be linked to our local program so you can purchase them from her at Vista Grande over the next couple of weeks. This will be an ongoing mission throughout the year so if this isn't a great time for you, there will be another opportunity in the new year.

One Nation – Elder Boxes

Items are to fit in a shoe box and try and keep the value to close to \$20. Here are some suggested items for the box:

Shampoo, Soap, Comb/brush, Coffee/Mug, Hat/Gloves, Playing cards, Band-Aids
Antiseptic ointment, Flashlight and Batteries, Notepads/note cards/pens, Wet wipes
Toothbrush/Toothpaste, Pocket knife, Sewing kit, Tissues, Washcloth, Warm socks

Please bring to Vista Grande by December 2.

Mission (continued)

Family Promise – Adopt a Family for Christmas Program

We are adopting a family for Christmas. Check out the warmth tree for the paper ornaments listing the family's wish list. Take one and bring the gift wrapped and labeled **by Dec 16**. If you choose an item that may be more than you planned, ask one or more of your friends to go in on it with you.

Warmth Tree—This tree is for hats, mitts, etc (anything that will keep folks warm.) All items on the tree will be distributed to our various local missions. This year, the tree will have paper ornaments with gift wishes from some of our Family Promise families. Please have all gifts wrapped and labeled and back to Vista Grande by Dec 16.



HANGING OF THE GREENS



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1ST

9:30 AM

Please join us as we celebrate and decorate Vista Grande for Advent and Christmas!

Coffee, Hot Chocolate, Cookies, and light snacks will be provided!

WORSHIP TEAM MEETING: DECEMBER 3RD AT 6 PM

Anyone interested in planning and being part of working behind the scenes to assist in creating a sacred space and making worship wonderful please join us! Questions? Connect with Crystal at ckarr97@gmail.com or 719-747-0320.

Covenantal Partners

December Birthdays

5	Maurine Hale
5	Nicolas Siebert
6	Ruth Eastwood
7	Mel Druelinger
10	Jan Morgan
10	Charlie Morgan
10	Ellen Barry
12	Michelle Wright
19	Brenda Collins
23	Erin Elkaim
26	Evelline "Evee" Martin

January Birthdays

12	Jeanne Harrington
12	John Tinsley
12	Jon Elkaim
14	Isaiah King
18	David Bristow
20	Bev Price
21	Jan Kolm
23	Nicolas "Nico" Garcia

January Anniversary

Jan 9 Jud and Maggie Jusell

Cleaning Schedule

Nov 24 and Dec 1 – Donna and Dave Bristow

Dec 8 and Dec 15 – Jackie and Jerry Moore

Dec 22 and 29 – Carolyn and Lyn Gunning

Jan 5 and 12 - Carol and Phil Puterbaugh



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.

**Women's Fellowship –
Saturday December 15 at 10:30 a.m.**

This is our Annual Women's Brunch and Cookie Exchange at Roberta Povelite's home. (1279 Baron Rd)

Bring a few dozen cookies; we'll sample and take an assortment of cookies home.

Also bring a Brunch dish to share.



The Christmas Fund (one of the UCC 5 for 5 offerings), provides direct financial assistance to retired and active United Church of Christ authorized ministers and lay employees and their surviving spouses, including pension and health premium supplementation, emergency assistance, and Christmas thank-you checks. A ministry of the Pension Boards, the offering is received annually on Christmas Eve.

Your gift to the Christmas Fund will not only assist pastors, but also provide for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks next December to lower-income retirees.

Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

January 2019—Save These Dates

HAPPY NEW YEAR

The Wider Church—The Southeastern Association is sponsoring a workshop at Vista Grande on **Saturday January 12** from 11 a.m.—2 p.m. More details to follow.

Vista Grande's Annual Meeting

Sunday January 27, 2019

Let's celebrate all our accomplishments during 2018.



December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sunday Schedule 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Wor-						1 9:30 a.m. Decorate for Advent
2 Sunday Schedule Communion 1 pm YDA Films 1st Sunday of Advent	3 5 pm Executive Council 6:30 pm Worship	4 9 am—Coffee and Conversation with Clare and Mallory	5 5:30 pm Advent	6	7	8 9—11 am Grief Workshop
9 Sunday Schedule CAC Mtg 2nd Sunday of Advent	10	11 9 am—Coffee and Conversation with Clare and Mallory	12 8 a.m. Men's Breakfast 5:30 pm Advent	13	14	15 10:30 am Women's Fellowship Brunch and Cookie Exchange
16 Sunday Schedule Las Posadas 3rd Sunday of Advent	17	18 9 am—Coffee and Conversation with Clare and Mallory	19 5:30 pm Advent	20	21 6:30 pm Blue Christmas at Vista Grande (Mallory leading)	22
23 Sunday Schedule Mission Team 4th Sunday of Advent	24 5:30 pm Candlelight Service	25 	26	27	28	29
30 Sunday Schedule	31 New Year's Eve					

January 2019

	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
6 Sunday Schedule Communion Epiphany (Undecorating)	7	5 p.m. Executive Council	8 9 am—Coffee and Conversa- tion with Clare and Mallory	9 8 am Men's Breakfast	10	11	12 11 am—2 pm Active Shooters Work- shop
13 Sunday Schedule	14	15 9 am—Coffee and Conversa- tion with Clare and Mallory	16	17	18	19	
20 Sunday Schedule	21 MLK Day	22 9 am—Coffee and Conversa- tion with Clare and Mallory	23	24	25	26	
27 Sunday Schedule Annual Meeting	28	29 9 am—Coffee and Conversa- tion with Clare and Mallory	30	31			



**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.

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.”

Vista Grande UCC is a **Just Peace** Church. “We, the Covenantal Partners of Vista Grande Community Church United Church of Christ, declare ourselves a Just Peace Church. As a congregation and as individuals, we prayerfully strive to live out Jesus’ non-violent words and actions in treating all people and the environment with dignity and respect. With humility, we seek to establish relationships with others through what may be uncomfortable conversations. While calling attention to imbalances of power and privilege, we will promote peacemaking and work to resist and dismantle religious, political, economic and social systems of oppression. We acknowledge that peace and justice work is a dynamic process, and we will need to grow continually in our empathy in order to have a positive impact in our homes, neighborhoods, communities, nation and world.”