



The Vista Views

Inside this issue

Meeting the Holy Family by Rev. Clare Twomey

(I realize that some of you may have already heard a variation of this story in a recent sermon, but I figured that since I needed to ‘tell’ it again, maybe we all need to hear it again...)

What does one do on a rainy cold morning in May, when one shows up for work and finds a family huddled underneath the concrete bench next to the front doors of the church? And what does one do when the pile of blankets begins to move and that which emerges from the layers is a man, a woman, a Boxer and a Poodle?

Embarrassingly, the first thing I thought about was how much work I needed to get done and how this encounter was probably going to take up most of my morning. This was followed by my concern that my dog, Cracker Jack was with me and, while she loves two legged creatures, she is not always fond of other four legged. Next came the stuff that runs through my head: Do we have food to give away? They will probably want money, do I have any cash in case they need a few dollars? Do I have room in my car if they need a ride...oh wait that won't work I have my dog! And of course, my go to thought when confronted by the conundrum of homelessness: How do I help without also being a participant in a toxic system that just enables those on the street? And on and on and on...

I know, I know, none of this is very pastoral. And most of it was about me (and Cracker) and not about the crew at the door. But I honestly didn't want to deal with this today. Ok, what I really didn't want to deal with were all those questions that just ran through my head. It's so much easier when issues are academic, you know? Like stuff we preach and talk about in the safety of our progressive four walls. But see, I hadn't solved the problem of what to do so I didn't want to be confronted with it until I had. HA! Like that's going to happen. But still...

I said hello a couple of times, each time getting a bit louder. There was a grunt and then layers of clothing started to peel away as the man appeared first and then tried to wake his wife. She was moving more slowly than he had and after a few moments, it was easy to see she was in pain. They finally both sat up and began to apologize, clearly embarrassed that they had been found huddling under our meager overhang, trying to escape the cold mist that had been lingering. He began to say they just wanted to find a place out of the rain and I responded with a brilliant, "Probably not the best spot though." And of course he agreed with my privileged comment and again began to apologize again. And then I began to be aware that I was feeling embarrassed. Here I am with the key to a warm, dry building and I was feeling 'Put out' by their presence. The God of irony was at it again.

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Special points of interest:

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



The **45th Annual Celebration of the Rocky Mountain Conference, June 6-8, 2019**, at Two Rivers Convention Center in Grand Junction, Colorado!

THEME

The theme for this year's Annual Celebration: *Embracing the Spirit of Joy and Light*. As we look to the future, our spirits soar with the anticipation of new possibilities! Let us draw together as we continue listening for spirit, strengthening our connection, and tipping towards the enduring good.

Vista Grande is submitting a poster as a recipient of a RMC "In the Mud" grant.

Our voting delegates for 2019 are Dana Zimmerman and David Bristow.

Pastor Clare and several others are attending from Vista Grande.

2019 is a United Church of Christ General Synod year.

Pastor Clare is a delegate for the Southeastern Association of the Rocky Mountain Conference. She will be in Milwaukee June 19-25, 2019.

Kayan Cross is also attending

Our Staff

Pastor—Rev Clare Twomey Music Director—David Hudson

Seminary Student Intern—Mallory Everhart

Office Administrator—Donna Bristow

Nursery Attendant—Valerie Karr

Pastor's Hours

The hours are flexible.

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

2019 Executive Committee voted in on Jan. 27, 2019 consists of

Moderator – Brian Sojourner; Assistant Moderator – Kayan Cross; Treasurer – Dana Zimmerman; Financial Secretary – John Tinsley; Clerk – Deborah Tinsley; Members-at-Large – Carol Burbank and Jeannie Harrington

Member in Discernment—Brian Sojourner

And here's where one of two things were possible. Either I could be resentful of this family showing up and putting me through all this angst, or I could swallow my entitlement and embarrassment and use the resources I had at my disposal for good. Ok, now I got it! By the grace bestowed upon me in that moment I took the higher, "savior to the rescue" ground, and started the problem solving. I secured my dog so that the family could come in. He lifted her up from the cold ground and we came into building. She accepted a cup of tea, but he declined drink or food. I asked, "Where are you from? What are your resources? Do you have family? Are you hungry? Do you need a hotel room? But wait you have dogs...etc. etc. etc." Over the course of the next few hours, I was turned on my head over and over, rocking between the embarrassment that comes from the realization that you haven't got a clue, and being humbled by the sacredness of what was unfolding before me. This family had walked from Divide where their car, (read home) had been impounded for expired tags and insurance. For good measure the deputy also took the woman's driver's license even though it wasn't expired. This meant that with no ID, she couldn't get her check on the first of the month which would help to get her car back, her tags renewed, and update her insurance. She couldn't stay in a hotel to get out of the rain even if there was one that took pets, and she couldn't stay in a shelter because she couldn't prove who she was. His predicament was similar in that his ID was expired and as such this kept him pretty much in the same place. She also reported a myriad of medical issues and difficulty getting the meds she needed because, you guessed it, and she didn't have insurance.

I was out of my league here. I had nothing to offer for them, (or to me to feel better??) I asked permission to call the police homeless unit for help. They agreed, and the cops came. Finally we got somewhere. If this couple could get to the station downtown, they could get a referral to Springs Rescue. He didn't want to go because of some of his own issues with crowds. "I've been on the streets for a long time, but this is the first time with a significant other. All I want is to get her a warm, dry place where she can rest. That's all I need."

Eventually, we got her a ride. While we were waiting for Jon to arrive to take her and one of the pups downtown, the man started to break down and cry. I expected him to say that he was crying because of how hard life on the streets can be, or how mean folks are to them, or how upset he had been because he felt that he couldn't provide for his wife. He had shared all that this already. But when his wife asked him why he was crying he simply said because he was overwhelmed by the kindness I had shown him. Now hear me, please! I do not tell you this because I am proud of myself, or because I want to set a good example, or because I feel good about what I had done. QUITE THE OPPOSITE. I share this because I did very little. I felt my face turn red, again with embarrassment. They got 3 hours of my time. They had, between them, 2 cups of tea and water for the dogs. They did not want food. They did not want money. He didn't even want a room. She rested on the bench in the hallway. He just wanted help to get his wife someplace safe and warm. They shared with me part of their story. The entrusted me with their vulnerability. They praised me for showing kindness, for crying out loud! They thanked me profusely for doing so little while having so much.

I am still processing this entire experience. I have been humbled in ways I don't find particularly comfortable. I continue to be challenged by the 'issue' of homelessness. I am no further along in discovering how to take this on. I still wonder what actions are helpful and what are toxic. But here is one thing I have that I didn't before. And I have this because of how this family treated me. How I was turned on my head and became the recipient of their grace.

So, what does one--me, you, all of us—do when a family shows up and mucks up your plans?

When one shows up to work on a cold and rainy morning and finds a family huddled together to try to keep dry and warm, perhaps we should begin this encounter with the idea that this is no ordinary family, but a Holy Family. A Holy Family wondering if this is the place they might find some shelter even for 3 hours. Perhaps this is where we begin...

Mallory Everhart (Farewell as my Internship is Ending)

Dear ones,

Transition, even when done faithfully, is difficult. To say I am thankful for the time I have spent at Vista Grande is an understatement. I have nothing but gratitude for the warmth with which you welcomed me into your community, the fervor with which you have supported me, and the confidence with which you have sent me out. I have learned so much from, with, and because of you and I will carry those lessons on into my ministry.

Though my internship in an official capacity is ending, I am not disappearing from the community. I will still be organizing Finding Home: A Community for Spiritual Outsiders. The entire VG family is invited and I encourage you to share information about this gathering with those who might need it. It is an intimate and loving group who get together every Friday night at 6:30pm for dinner and meditation practice. If you need more information, Donna has flyers in the office, as well as an electronic copy of it! You can also reach out to findinghomecos@gmail.com.

Vista Grande, you are a special church. I hope you feel that in the depths of your soul as you look around at the faces you sit beside every Sunday. Your love of God and your thirst for justice is unparalleled and the ways in which you care for each other is remarkable. If I were to leave you with one piece of guidance, though, it is this: Seek God as much as you seek justice. These things go hand-in-hand and feed one another. For a few weeks yet, this is the season of Pentecost, which is traditionally a time for discernment and prayer. You may be surprised at where the Spirit leads you, both individually and as a congregation. I will be cheering you on, as I know you will be rooting for me, as we all seek the next steps on our journey.

You are in my heart and in my prayers. Until we meet again, beloveds.

In joy.

Mallory Everhart

Outreach Ministry Announcement:

Finding Home on Friday evenings at 6:30 p.m. will continue at Vista Grande led by Mallory Everhart

At **Finding Home**, we believe everyone is on a unique journey. If you're looking for a spiritual community without the baggage, you're welcome to travel with us for as little or as long as you like. We aren't in it to tell you what your next steps are. We're trying to figure that out, too. The one thing we know is that we are better together.

Finding Home is an LGBTQ+ affirming, recovery (whatever that means to you) affirming community of spiritual seekers. If this sounds like something you're into, you're welcome. Come join us for dinner, conversation, singing, ritual, and practice. Questions? Contact Mallory at findinghomecos@gmail.com

Worship

We are excited about June 9th's Celebration of Pentecost! Be sure to wear red and be ready to experience the Spirit! Pentecost is often considered the birthday of the church! It is when we celebrate the Spirit moving amongst the disciples and followers of Jesus as described in Acts 2.

If you are interested in the behind the scenes preparations for worship please email/text/call Crystal at ckarr97@gmail.com or 719.247.0320. We meet the 2nd Monday of each month. We are currently deciding on time so contact Crystal with what time works best for you!

Summer Music

The choir is taking a well-deserved break this summer. Would you like to share some special music? Vocal or instrumental or both. This can be a solo or ensemble.

Contact David Hudson, our Music Director, to make arrangements.



Faith Formation



Adult Faith Formation "Percolate"

Percolate took a break from reading Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God by theologian Kelly Brown Douglas. In preparation to hear Miguel A. De La Torre at the James White lecture series, we have started reading Burying White Privilege – Resurrecting A Bad-ass Christianity. In this book, De La Torre, argues that over the centuries, White Evangelical Christianity has been reduced to a justification of racism, classism, sexism and homophobia – “choosing profits over prophets. “

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

VGCC's Guiding Values:

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

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

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 Action Team

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. We saw two films, followed by discussion with the filmmakers, on April 28th. We hope to have another showing in July. 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.



Inside/Out Youth Services is hiring a part-time psychologist; the queer prom was well attended, with over 430 kids; and plans are moving along on the True Center for gender diversity. Faye reported that her daughter who works for Simla school library, has had requests for a queer program there but she is getting community push back. We may be able to help with that, as well as Inside/Out.

Transgender health services coming to Colorado Springs

This is the plan for the near future. Vista Grande Covenantal Partners; Nancy Morlock-Hollins, Kayan Cross and Pastor Clare have been meeting and working in conjunction with Inside Out, UCCS, a couple local doctors and the TRUE Center for Gender Diversity in Denver to establish a clinic in Colorado Springs that will provide specific health care services to transgender youth and young Adults in a safe space.

TRUE (Trust Respect Understand Emerge) Center in Denver is located inside of Children's Hospital. They are set up to support and care for every aspect of the gender-diverse experience individuals and their families are going through. They have experts in adolescent medicine, endocrinology, nursing, psychology and social work. This blessing that is accessible to many young people and their families in the Denver and surrounding areas is also utilized by some individuals in Colorado Springs. It takes a lot for them to get there. When Nancy Morlock-Hollins discovered that such services were available and many young Trans people in Colorado Springs needing them aren't able to access them she decided to take action. She organized the first meeting of a few folks this winter at Inside Out. That meeting evolved into monthly meetings with others joining.

At the May 9th meeting Dr. Daniel Reirden, the director of the TRUE Center, met with us at UCCS and shared intent to provide some staff to Colorado Springs to expand their services! This is very exciting. There are other details to work out before these services begin. There is some funding available through Children's Hospital Colorado, There is space available at UCCS. The need for Safety and easy access will be factored in as well.

Mission

Los Pobres- Faye said 40 men with papers have arrived and need all basic necessities, some living in barns due to lack of housing. There will be a clothing drive for men's work clothes for the migrant workers who will soon be working the farmland.

One Nation, Judy dropped off around \$1500 in food, some people on reservations still without basics, due to refusal of state to provide rescue services.

The last **Family Promise** dinner went well. We are on board to provide a meal on Nov. 18 unless we get asked to fill a void during another church's schedule. September 8 is a walk-a-thon to raise money to help our homeless family population in Colorado Springs. In August, you can sign up to walk the 1.5 or 3 mile walk or financially support a walker. (In 2018, Vista Grande raised \$555.)

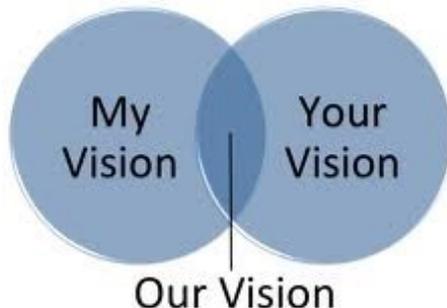
Just Peace

After the establishment of our designation as a Just Peace Church last summer, the team finally met in March this year. The plan was to first establish what justice issues are prevalent to the congregation and most pressing. It was decided that since the Covenantal Partners voted to be a Just Peace Church that they should participate in how we live up to this designation.

With that in mind our first challenge was to figure out how to get that input considering a limited number of Partners were able to attend that initial meeting. After extensive discussion regarding our intention to proceed on the journey of Justice and Peace it was decided that we would create establishing a questionnaire and distribute to all partners. The goal is to have them completed and returned to the Just Peace team by Sunday, June 9. In doing so, we will be able to proceed as a church in our just actions and humble walks with God.

The team will review the questionnaires at our June meeting which will be on the 3rd Thursday, June 20, 2019. Please consider joining us. We could benefit from some additional representation.

Vision Team



There will be a Vision Group meeting on June 6th, 5:30 p.m. at VG. Soup and bread will be served. Anyone interested in the work of envisioning the future of Vista Grande is invited to attend. Please let Deborah know if you will be attending (dtinsley12@gmail.com) for purposes of meal planning. All attending are asked to bring their own vision statement; these will be thrown in the pot and see what we make from them!!

Covenantal Partners



June

- 1 Dana Zimmerman
- 2 Kamryn Hollins
- 8 Zelda Pope
- 19 Lyn Gunning
- 19 Kelli Baptist
- 23 Julia Hollins
- 25 Cindy Solomon-Klebba
- 25 Doug Capps
- 29 Shari (Curly) Solomon-Klebba

Anniversaries:

- June 11 Bob and Nancy Hollins
- June 16 Clare Twomey and Liz Bliss
- June 19 Jerry and Jackie Moore

July

- 1 Anna Salmela
- 7 Marcie Wegner
- 7 Bob Hollins
- 9 Valerie Karr
- 15 Judy Druelinger
- 15 Jerry Moore
- 15 Margaret Natelli
- 25 Faye Gallegos
- 27 Eduardo Martin
- 30 Deborah Tinsley

July Anniversaries:

- July 3 Maggie and Ron Forth
- July 18 Jim and Bev Price
- July 20 Tim and Kelli Baptist
- July 26 Tammie Davis and Ruth Eastwood
- July 28 Chase and Melissa Bongirno

Cleaning Schedule

- June 8 and 15 — Dave and Donna Bristow
- June 22 and 28 — Richard and Carol Burbank
- July 6 and 13 — Jan Morgan and Erin Elkaim
- July 20 and 27 — Bob, Nancy & Julia Hollins
- July 27 and Aug. 03 — Rosemary McBride & Sons



GARDEN – The patio garden is getting some attention this spring. Ideas for low maintenance plants are being submitted and the ground will be prepared on June 1. We still need folks to help with raking, trash pickup, and general trimming.

Living Room Conversations (LRC)

A World Full of Neighbors: Conversations to Heal Divides

June 28-30

This brand-new program is a joint effort of La Foret and Living Room Conversations, both non-profits seeking to making the world a better place. Living Room Conversations is an organization with a simple concept that is surprisingly powerful- respectful conversations that build relationship across divides. LRC's trained facilitators will lead us in meaningful discussions and provide us with tools to bridge divides in our own communities and families.

In an increasingly divided world, learn to be a champion for understanding at this transformational weekend retreat.

In addition to the powerful sessions led by LRC experts, this retreat includes plenty of time for relaxation and relationship building. Enjoy all our campus has to offer- hiking trails, pool, meditation labyrinth, nighttime campfires, and more!

Cost: \$270 All Inclusive Retreat. \$95 Off Site Accommodations.

Out of your budget? Bring a friend with a different viewpoint from yours and receive 20% off your registrations. Still too high? We can help! Email Logan@laforet.org for pricing options.



Save These Dates

Annual Outdoor Worship and Picnic—Sunday August 25 at Fox Run Park

Women's Retreat—Saturday Sept 7 at La Foret

Family Promise Fundraiser Walk—Sunday Sept 8 downtown COS

The Southeastern Association is sponsoring a Sacred Conversations to End Racism (SC2ER) 8-part workshop. Beginning May 5.

You are invited to begin a restorative justice journey with Sacred Conversations to End Racism (SC2ER).

Come join this essential eight-week study beginning May 5 at Vista Grande UCC, 5460 N. Union Blvd. in Colorado Springs, from 1 to 3 p.m.

If you missed this one, there is a phase 2 coming.

June 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sunday Schedule 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Worship 11:15 am Fellowship			No Choir Rehearsal for the summer Would you like to provide special music for the worship service?		1 9 am Outdoor Workday	
2 Sunday Schedule Communion 1 pm—SC2ER Class begins	3 5 pm Executive Council	4 9 am—Coffee and Conversation	5	6 RMC Annual Celebration in Grand Junction 5:30 pm Vision Mtg	7 6:30 pm Finding Home	8
9 Sunday Schedule 1 pm—SC2ER PENTECOST	10 5 pm Executive Council	11 9 am—Coffee and Conversation	12 8 am Men's Breakfast	13	14 6:30 pm Finding Home	15
16 Sunday Schedule 1 pm—SC2ER	17	18	19	20 5:30 pm Just Peace Mtg	21 General Synod 6:30 pm Finding Home	22
23 Sunday Schedule No SC2ER today Crystal Karr preaching	24	25	26	27	28 6:30 pm Finding Home	29
30 Sunday Schedule 1 pm—SC2ER			Note: Donna out-of-the-office June 11—18 Clare out-of-town June 19—26 (at General Synod)			

July 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 9 am—Coffee and Conversation	3	4 	5	6
7 Sunday Schedule Communion	8 5 pm Executive Council	9 9 am—Coffee and Conversation	10 8 am Men's Breakfast	11	12	13 Pride Fest	
14 Sunday Schedule Pride Fest	15	16 9 am—Coffee and Conversation	17	18 5:30 pm Just Peace Mtg	19	20	
21 Sunday Schedule	22	23 9 am—Coffee and Conversation	24	25	26	27	
28 Sunday Schedule	29	30 9 am—Coffee and Conversation	31	Note: Donna out-of-the-office July 3–15			



**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.”