



The Vista Views

Inside this issue

I Am Behind *by Rev. Clare Twomey*

I am behind. Far behind, as evidenced by the lateness of this essay and thus the lateness of the newsletter. It would be easy to offer a number of plausible reasons why and few that aren't much more than excuses, but the fact remains: I am far behind. Far behind planning some things. Far behind finishing some things. Far behind returning some calls and setting up some meetings. Far behind decorating and Christmas shopping. Far behind.

The irony of this is not lost on me, this the season which asks us to slow down and become introspective. The season of Advent invites us to meditate, participate in the lost art of waiting, anticipating, and longing. We are so used to moving forward, or at least trying to move forward. Sometimes the movement is less linear and more just a frenetic jerk to the left or right. But still we keep moving. Now, sometimes movement is necessary for survival no matter the direction. Stopping to contemplate in the middle of a busy intersection is never a good idea. Sitting in the middle of the deep woods as the sun retreats behind the mountains, isn't a good idea either. Sometimes we find that we feel compelled to move to meet deadlines, either work related or self-imposed. Other times we bounce around finding something to do so that we are not overcome with anxiety, or depression or grief.

So yeah, there are times moving is essential to our physical, mental or spiritual wellbeing. But there are also times when we move because we don't know what else to do. Or because, while we seek a sense of spiritual calm, the idea of actually stopping to figure out how to find it terrifies us! The longing for 'knowing', feeling, experiencing intimacy with our Beloved is almost palpable. And yet we do everything in our power to avoid slowing down to a crawl or stopping completely so that we can come face to face with the Holy One. Oh we may sideswipe, or catch a glimpse of the Divine from time to time. But for some reason we move the fastest when we are closest or when our longing is the greatest.

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Special points of interest:

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



The Light Shines in the Darkness

This is the 2019 theme for The Christmas Fund
For the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund.

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks.

In 2018, gifts to the Christmas Fund enabled

Small pension supplementation for 379 retired clergy and lay employees (\$1,453,050)

Health benefits supplementation for 174 retired clergy and lay employees (\$429,903)

Emergency grants for 49 individuals and families (\$60,526)

Christmas "Thank You" gift checks to 401 retired clergy and lay employees (\$214,100)

Our Staff

Lead Pastor—Rev. Clare Twomey

Minister of Vision and Support—Rev. Deborah Tinsley

Music Director—David Hudson

Office Administrator—Donna Bristow

Nursery Attendant—Valerie Karr

Lead Pastor's Hours

Office hours are flexible.

If you'd like to meet with Clare,
please call her at **719-351-0168**.

2019 Executive Committee:

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

The next newsletter will be the January/February 2020 edition.
Deadline for articles is January 1. E-mail your articles to admin@vgcc.org

This season has intentional landmarks. These landmarks of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love are not some glittered covered, gift wrapped, sprinkle laden, romanticized notions of what this season represents. These are the depths of human longings, the intense desires of our hearts and souls in a world which can insist that we keep moving towards petty distractions and temporary fixes. A longing so deep and long that we find ourselves revisiting a season every year which reminds us for the need to STOP. A season which demonstrates that no matter how far behind we are with some things, we are mostly way behind in allowing ourselves to come face to face with our Beloved.

Imagine, even just for a moment, what it would be like to have that deep longing satisfied; to know that the expectation our God has of us is for us to show up in this relationship. What does it mean for you to realize that while this season is one of longing and expectation for us, that it is also one of longing and expectations for our Beloved? As much as we have these deep longings for the Holy One, God has the same longings for us.

This is the profound mystery of Christmas: Our Beloved showing up and waiting for us to stop long enough to make God's acquaintance once again. And if that's the reason for the season then maybe it's worth falling behind and lingering for a while...

Happy Holy Days to you and yours, and a sacred wish for a life giving and wonderfully surprising New Year.

Peace, Clare

VGUCC Vitality and Clergy Excellence Survey

In June of 2017 the [Pastoral Relations Committee](#) (PRC) presented the congregation with the results of the survey conducted in the late spring of 2017, which was initiated in response to Pastor Clare's request for an evaluation. The survey was based on "Congregational Vitality and Ministerial Excellence: Intersections and Possibilities for Ministry" a paper by Rev. Dr. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi who was the Director, UCC Center for Analytics, Research and Data (CARD). Her paper coupled church vitality and pastor's performance. The results of the 2017 survey were very positive. If you are interested in seeing the "VGCC Vitality and Clergy Excellence Survey Results" please contact David Bristow.

As it's been over two years since the last survey the PRC is going to conduct a similar survey to again evaluate Pastor Clare in the context of VGUCC's vitality. The survey collection process will start in the new year, with expectations that we will wrap up the results by the VGUCC Annual meeting. To accomplish our goal, we need your completed survey before Jan 26, 2020. The survey will be made available both in electronic and paper formats later this year. For the survey to be meaningful it is essential that we get a large number of completed results from the congregation.

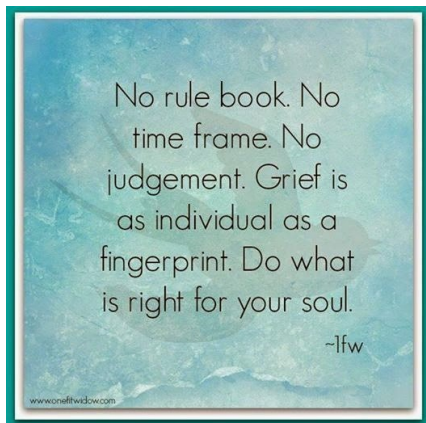
Rev. Lynne M. Simcox as a former chair of the Council of Conference Ministers Cabinet emphasized that "Evaluation of clergy and ministry settings should be based on the common understanding that our call is to be faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit. To be effective, an evaluation must be done with openness and honesty and involve the desire for constructive and faithful growth of all parties involved."

David Bristow



News from Mallory ... Finding Home

Different night, same great community building! In an effort to be more accessible, Finding Home is moving its weekly gatherings from Friday evenings to Sunday evenings. Come join us for dinner, thoughtful conversation, and contemplative practice. Sundays at 6:30pm in the fellowship hall. All are welcome!



Blue Christmas/Longest Night - For those whose hearts have been touched by grief, the holidays can be a difficult time. Amidst all the lights and parties, laughter and memory-making, there is a heaviness which can seem out of place, making it all the more difficult to bear. On December 21st at 6:30, the longest night of the year, join other people who are struggling this holiday season for a time of healing, music, sharing, support by qualified professionals, and an open mic on the theme of grief and difficult holiday experiences. This event in partnership with Poetry 719.

Worship

Themes for December

First Sunday of Advent—Sunday December 1 HOPE

First Sunday of Advent—Sunday December 8 PEACE

Finding Home—Sunday December 8 at 6:30 p.m.

First Sunday of Advent—Sunday December 15 JOY

Las Posadas—Sunday December 15 at 10 a.m.

Blue Christmas—Saturday December 21 at 6:30 p.m.

First Sunday of Advent—Sunday December 22 LOVE

Christmas Eve—Tuesday December 24 at 5:30 p.m.

First Sunday after Christmas—Sunday December 29

Epiphany Sunday January 5—Mallory Everhart preaching



Adult Faith Formation “Percolate” 8:30 a.m.

Our Sunday morning adult group continues to discuss Kelly Brown Douglas' book, Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God. There is so much to think about and to try to understand. For most of us it's a brand new lens through which to view history and current events. There is a chance that the new year will have us tackling My Holy Envy of Other Faith Traditions by Barbara Brown Taylor.

The coffee is ready. Come on Sunday morning.



Stewardship by Dana Zimmerman

The Stewardship Ministry Team would like to report a very successful pledge campaign and thank the entire congregation for their enthusiastic support of Vista Grande United Church of Christ. Your response to our question, “How big can you dream?”, was a resounding affirmation of the work we are currently doing and encouragement for the future endeavors we hope to undertake.

We have received 36 financial pledges (9 more than last year) to the Church budget thus far, for a total of \$80,260, a 35% increase over 2019! Pledges to the Missions budget are currently at \$18,359, a 30% increase over 2019! Additionally, there were many pledges of people's time and talents in the various areas of service to the church. All pledges are greatly appreciated and will allow Vista Grande to continue to be a vital presence in our community and help us accomplish our mission and justice work. THANK YOU

Construction Notice from Colorado Springs Utilities

If you travel Union Blvd from Academy to Woodmen you'll be affected by this construction!

Colorado Springs Utilities and the City of Colorado Springs are partnering on infrastructure improvements along North Union Blvd. Water pipeline improvements and paving/resurfacing work begins the first week of January and continues through fall 2020.

Traffic and access will be restricted. Expect delays and detours.

Finding an alternate route is strongly encouraged.



Mission

Vision for Mission

Mission/Outreach is an integral part of VGUCC 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.

Things are going well at **Inside-Out**. During this last bout of frigid nighttime temperatures, warm, safe places were found for **all** our homeless kids. Our numbers are growing and the kids continue to support each other. So much love!

Our advent collection of supplies for elder boxes is an on-going success for **One Nation Walking Together**.

This fall, with money left after meeting our commitments for our local missions and our 5-FOR-5 in 2018, we were able to give Los Pobres an additional \$500. Our recent stewardship campaign was a great success and our mission pledges are up by over 20%.



MISSION Giving Opportunities for this Holiday Season

Elder Boxes for One Nation Walking Together – due Dec. 8

Fill a shoe box with items for a value of \$20. Label whether it is appropriate for a male/female/youth/child. Contact Judy Druelinger (719-574-0535) if you have any questions.

New Socks for Soul 4 Soul – due Dec. 15

Socks socks socks!!! We are collecting Socks for Soul4Soul who will bring these to the border for migrants in need of clean items. They will also take underwear and gloves, all sizes and all brand new with receipts attached please. Contact Clare if you have questions (719-351-0168)

Books for Library on the Go (LOGO) – due Jan. 5

Take a gift tag off the warmth and giving tree at VGCC and purchase that book for LOGO. Contact Nancy with questions (719-598-1223)

Christmas Gifts for a family who is the Family Promise Program – due Dec. 15

These families will be living in the supported housing for Christmas and these gifts will help them have a joyful day.

The gift suggestions have been e-mailed out in a blast on December 6 and also are available from the warmth giving tree in the entryway. **Look for the GOLD colored paper ornaments.** Purchase that gift and label with the person's first name. (Dana has volunteered to do the wrapping again this year.)

Return to Vista Grande and place in the box provided for Family Promise.

Contact Donna with your questions (719-599-3057) or e-mail admin@vgcc.org

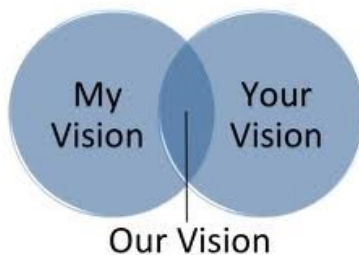
To the Covenantal Partners and Friends of Vista Grande:

The service of installation that took place on 27 October was the result of so many working together; Donna, Clare, Dana, Sean, Judy, Dave B, Nancy, Kayan (whoo hoo), Amanda for the use of her song, Dave H for working with the mass choir, Rev. Anne Cabbage. Then there was the reception (that was fabulous) and everyone who worked on that, many whose names I don't know because I was not to know what was planned (!) but I do know that Jeannie, Dana, Donna were a few of the many who made that possible. I bet you know where I am going with this: I joked during the service that it takes a village to get me doing what I mean to do, and it does. It is a source of great joy to say that this is my village.

I am aware that many of you give your prayers for the success of this church, your prayers that we continue to be in covenant with each other and with our God, and working to not only build up this church, but our community near and far. I am humbled that your prayers include me, that you pray that my ministry might be a part of that building up. We work best when we work together, and that is what the service and the reception showed. Each of us has a part to play in the greater work, and each of our efforts are greater when we work together, support each other, pray for each other, and continue to honor the covenant between us.

I thank each of you, for your work, for your prayers, for your continued enthusiasm which you demonstrate by giving of your time, your treasure, your incredible talents. It is deeply moving to be here, to continue to learn from each of you, and very exciting to face the future together. Vista Grande United Church of Christ will continue to innovate, lead, inspire, and to provide a space for all of God's beloved to belong and be supported on their journey of faith. Together we are Vista Grande, and if we can dream it, there really isn't anything we can't accomplish. Thank you for the gift of the Africana Bible, and thank you for your faith, your trust.

With thanks, and in gratitude, I wish each of you very best wishes for a lovely holiday season.
Deborah



Covenantal Partners

December Birthdays

5 Maurine Hale
5 Nicolas Siebert
5 Maggie Tanner
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 "Eve" Martin



January Birthdays

10 John Allen
12 Jeannie Harrington
12 John Tinsley
12 Jon Elkaim
14 Isaiah King
18 David Bristow
20 Bev Price
21 Jan Kolm

January Anniversary

Jan 9 Jud and Maggie Jusell

Cleaning Schedule

Dec 7 and Dec 14 –Lyn and Carolyn Gunning
Dec 21 and 28—Dave and Donna Bristow
Jan 4 and 11 – Richard and Carol Burbank
Jan 18 and 25—Jan Morgan/Erin Elkaim





UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Purpose, Vision, and Mission of the United Church of Christ

These statements were overwhelmingly affirmed by the UCC Board of Directors at their fall business meeting, October 20-22, 2016.

Purpose Statement (from the Gospel of Matthew):

To love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.

Vision Statement:

United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

Mission statement:

United in Spirit and inspired by God's grace, we welcome all, love all, and seek justice for all.

PLEGGED GIVING for January – November 2019

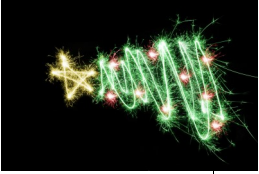
Funds	Pledged (Jan-Nov)	Received (Jan-Nov)	Difference
General Operating	54,461.00	55,942.00	1,481.00
Mission/ Outreach	12,956.17	12,850.0	106.17

Epiphany Sunday—January 5
Mallory Everhart preaching


Annual Meeting—Sunday January 26 at 11:15 a.m.



December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Sunday Schedule Communion 1 pm—SC2ER—phase 2	2	3 9 am—Coffee and Con- versation 10 am—Staff Mtg	4 7 pm Choir 7 p.m.—Choir	5	6	7
8 Sunday Schedule 1 pm—SC2ER—phase 2 6:30 pm Finding Home	9 4 pm Worship Team Mtg 5 pm Executive Council Mtg	10 9 am—Coffee and Con- versation	11 8 am Men's Breakfast 7 pm Choir 7 p.m.—Choir	12	13	14 9:30 am Wom- en's Brunch and Cook- ie Exchange
15 Sunday Schedule Las Posadas 1 pm—SC2ER—phase 2 6:30 pm Finding Home	16	17 9 am—Coffee and Con- versation 10 am—Staff Mtg	18 7 pm Choir	19	20	21 Blue Christmas 6:30 p.m. Blue Christmas
22 Sunday Schedule 11:45 am Just Peace Mtg 6:30 pm Finding Home	23 7 pm Choir	24 5:30 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE	25 	26	27	28
29 Sunday Schedule 6:30 pm Finding Home	30	31	1	2 5:30 pm Vision Mtg And Potluck	3 Sunday Schedule 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Worship 11:15 am Fellowship 6:30 pm Finding Home	

January 2020

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
							
	Sunday Schedule 8:30 am Adult Faith Formation 10 am MultiGen Worship 11:15 am Fellowship 6:30 pm Finding Home				2 5:30 pm—Vision Team Mtg	3	4
5 Sunday Schedule Communion (Undecorating) Mission Mtg	6	7 9 am—Coffee and Conversation with Clare	8 8 am Men's Breakfast 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	9	10	11	
12 Sunday Schedule	13 4 pm Worship Team 5 p.m. Executive Council 5:30 pm Family Promise	14 9 am—Coffee and Conversation with Clare 10 am—Staff Mtg	15 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	16	17	18	
19 Sunday Schedule	20 MLK Day	21 9 am—Coffee and Conversation with Clare	22 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	23	24	25	
26 Sunday Schedule Annual Meeting	27	28 9 am—Coffee and Conversation with Clare 10 am—Staff Mtg	29 7 pm Choir Rehearsal	30	31		



**Vista Grande
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

www.vgcc.org

COME, GROW WITH US

We are a caring church for thinking people, an inclusive community of faith, united in our common quest to know God, inspired by the spirit of Jesus, and committed to sharing that love in ways that will make a difference in the world.

We are the Open and Affirming (ONA) Church in Northeast Colorado Springs.

Vista Grande 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.”