



# The Vista Views

## Summer 2020 by Rev Clare

This is not what summer break is supposed to look like. At this point in any given year kids are being freed from schools; vacations are being planned and taken; pools are opening; restaurants are serving outdoors; trails are crowded; days are long and hot, and nights short, offering a cool respite; choirs in churches are taking a long deserved break while congregations adjust to the ebb and flow of church folk as we all embrace the change that summers bring.

But not this year. Our equilibrium has been disrupted. Those things we thought we could count on have either been altered or have completely disappeared. Some of us are wondering when we can get back to 'normal' and some are praying that we never return to such a dysfunctional way of being in this world. Some are venturing out because they are tired of being 'locked up'. They think that ripping off their masks and gathering in crowds is some kind of act of rebellion. This, while others are gathering knowing that they remain at risk of illness and death because the lives of others are depending on it. One group rebels to the act of 'doing unto others' out of a petty sense of being victimized and denied of their rights, while others 'lay down their lives' in an act of solidarity, putting their safety on pause because of something greater than themselves.

These are of course two extremes of how people are reacting to the unprecedented chaos in our world. Most of us fall somewhere in between. In between two global pandemics. Two viruses both of which have the potential to infect and kill EVERYONE. Two super bugs affecting a disproportionate number of dis-enfranchised human beings of color. The coincidence is astounding!! (Continued on page 3.)

### Statement of Vision: Vista Grande UCC

We covenant together to imagine and live into a world where God's Kin-dom vision of human and planetary flourishing comes to pass through the work of love, justice, peace, equality, and extravagant hospitality. We envision nothing less than a world restored to wholeness, wellness, joy, and gratitude. Our vision as a community of faith is to play our role, individually and collectively, in bringing that restored world into being for all of God's Creation. (Read page 10.)

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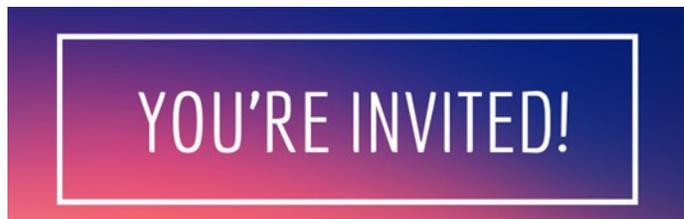
#### Special points of interest:

##### ZOOM

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

## Hello Rocky Mountain Conference!

If this were a “normal” year, this week we would all be collecting our thoughts and things and traveling to La Foret to engage in our Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration! But 2020, thus far, has been anything but normal, and while we’re disappointed we can’t share in-person time in our beautiful La Foret, we are still gathering — electronically — for our Annual Celebration. Back in the fall of 2019, the Board adopted the theme: **Leading in Troubled Times**, which now feels prophetically appropriate.



## Many Ways to Participate and Learn

Because we don’t have to pack everything into 2.5 days, we are going to take full advantage of this new-found spacious schedule. The Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration for 2020 will offer a variety of events (some live, some recorded) over the ten-day timeframe from **Monday, July 20 through Saturday, August 1**. For example, on Monday, July 20, we will post a pre-recorded **keynote by world-class theologian Susan Thislethwaite**. You may watch it on your own time, or join in one of two watch-parties during that week, and then join in a live talk-back with Susan on Saturday morning, July 25. We will also offer some workshops and other talk-back sessions with key leaders. A precise schedule of events will be announced no later than July 1, 2020.

(Continued on page 4.)

### 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  
Security Specialist—Timotheus Cross  
Finding Home Ministry—Mallory Everhart

### Lead Pastor's Hours

Office hours are flexible.  
If you’d like to meet with Clare, please call her at **719-351-0168**.

### 2020 Executive Committee:

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

The next newsletter will be the Sept/Oct/November 2020 edition.  
Deadline for articles is Aug 15. E-mail your articles to [admin@vgcc.org](mailto:admin@vgcc.org)

And with all of this going on, what do you think the number one question pastors are hearing?? You guessed it! ‘When are we re-opening??’

Churches across the nation are struggling to answer this. Congregations are insisting that their pastors capitulate to their demands to re-open the doors at any costs—even as it puts some of their most fervent members at risk of exclusion should they decide to stay home, or of death if they decide to come to church. In the Rocky Mountain Conference of the United Church of Christ, there are some pastors who fear they are at risk of losing their jobs if they don’t give in. Others are trying to compromise knowing that if they stand firm some people will leave the church and if they give in, some people will be left out. And of course, other churches are somewhere in between.

But then there is Vista Grande. To be clear, I have only heard the question ‘Do you know when we might re-open a handful of times. Each time I’ve responded with ‘not anytime soon’, I hear back, ‘oh good—that makes sense’.

I also hear, ‘Clare, we can’t go back to what we used to do if it leaves anyone out’. This sentiment fits in with every other part of this Beloved community that understands that church does not equal a building. Our church cannot re-open because it has never been closed!!

We remain faithful to our missions giving our pledged amount and staying in contact. In fact, we have even been involved with a new mission of providing goods for a small number of homeless.

Members in our congregation have made and handed out hundreds of masks.

These same masks have been worn by a handful of folx who still venture out to protest racial injustice.

Letters and notes are sent out from one group of congregants to another to let everyone know they are loved.

Kids will be receiving formation activities to do with their parents to remind them of their church family.

Council is functioning and taking care of church needs. Staff is being paid.

Our facilities group has been painting and sanding and loving our property.

Intentional book studies and conversations are still occurring.

Ministry abounds in a variety of ways with regard to the larger church.

Justice is being fought for in the streets and in prayer.

Our community has grown in numbers but also in its faithfulness to one another and to the world.

And we continue to gather weekly, creating sacred space in places we never even imagined.

So to answer that burning question: When will our doors be open? I have no idea.

But here is what I do know. This Beloved community was already in the midst of creating a ‘new normal’. We were already poised to do whatever we were called to do in order to co-create what God has always imagined could be for all of creation. We’ve been teetering on that precipice for quite some time. We have prayed many a time that God opened our eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand, and guess what? Our prayers have been answered. Right now, we are free falling into that unknown. But we are together, we are courageous, we love and are loved. I know we can trust that whatever comes we are well equipped to do great things. “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the HOLY ONE, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope”. Jeremiah 29:11

## News from Mallory ... Finding Home



Finding Home is now online! In this time of separation and anxiety, it becomes even more necessary for people to come together for connection and grounding. All are welcome to join this online gathering. We explore the intersection of art and spirituality, learning to listen for the ways the Divine is still speaking in our lives. Sundays at 6:30pm.

Finding Home has a new link for its online gatherings. Click in on Sunday evenings at 6:30 p.m.

<https://meet.jit.si/FindingHomeCOS>

## Annual Celebration (Continued from page 2.)

### Conference-Wide Worship on Sunday, July 26

The entire Conference is invited to participate in a Conference-wide Worship Service on the mid-Celebration Sunday of July 26, which will offer our pastors another moment of respite in this busy time.

### And There Is Business

During the week of July 27, we will move toward the business aspects of our meeting, with business item discussion sessions weekday evenings, and the **official business meeting the morning of Saturday, August 1** via Zoom. Business items will be posted for your review on the [RMC website](#) by July 1, or earlier.

### Delegates and Registration

As in past years, each church will have two voting delegates (some larger churches have three), and all members of the clergy are also voting delegates. Registration will be required, but the Conference is offering full registration for free. ***That's right, this year's Annual Celebration is 100% free!*** This means even more people in your churches may participate, even if they are not voting delegates. During the registration process, there will be ways to make offering donations to particular mission causes, still to be determined. A detailed video on how to register and participate in events will be released no later than July 1.

### What To Do Now

What is important for you to do now is select your delegates, and be sure they will each have 1) computer access, 2) adequate bandwidth internet to connect via Zoom, 3) sufficient social distancing if they were to gather to ensure the aforementioned access, and 4) familiarity with Zoom and Youtube (we will share the particular platforms or portals we will use in future news releases).

Again, details, times, and how to connect will be shared in the coming weeks — as well as a few surprises! We are looking forward to welcoming you to this unique conference gathering, so please stay tuned as we build our way to our Annual Celebration 2020!

## Faith Formation

This winter and spring we have been reading Barbara Brown Taylor's book Holy Envy-Finding God in the Faith of Others. Instead of being an academic study of world religions, she takes us through the spiritual practices and rituals of other religions and shows us how much we can learn from others. She also cautions us not to compare the best parts of our own religion with the worst parts of others.



We should wrap up Holy Envy by the end of June and then will start Susan Brooks Thistlewaite's book Dreaming of Eden-American Religion and Politics in a Wired World. Rev. Thistlewaite will be the keynote speaker at this year's Annual Meeting of the Rocky Mountain Conference in July 2020.

Percolate meets each Sunday morning at 8:30. All are welcome whether or not you've read the book. (During this pandemic you will have to "percolate" your own coffee.)

### ZOOM WORSHIP—Our Sunday morning worship meets at 10 a.m.

Use the Zoom link to join in.



<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9115878719?pwd=WXI6RDJVZnRZbTA5YUhSOEVPcjQrZz09>

Meeting ID: 911 587 8719

Password: VGUCC

This link is e-mailed in our Monday weekly e-blast and Thursday worship invite. If you would like to receive these e-mailing, please contact Donna at [admin@vgcc.org](mailto:admin@vgcc.org)

### SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Unfortunately, activities are on hold for now. The spaghetti dinner fundraiser needs more time before we can open for serving meals.

Rumor has it, we may try a drive-in worship.

The only activity that has consistently been available is Coffee and Conversation with Clare on Tuesday mornings at 9 a.m. via ZOOM.

Executive Council and Mission Team meet via ZOOM.

Facilities Team and Volunteers have tried to keep up with some of the property "must-do" list.

## 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.

We continue to support our four local missions: Family Promise, Inside-Out Youth Services, Los Pobres, and One Nation Walking Together. All these missions are relational and we support them financially as well as with in-kind gifts and by volunteering our time. During this pandemic we have also kept in touch by way of ZOOM. Additionally, we collect aluminum cans to support our youth, sell fair trade coffee to support our brothers and sisters across the border, and during May and the first week of June we have collected items to fill 52 bags with supplies for our local homeless sisters and brothers.



**Family Promise** is still working to provide for the homeless families in our community. The program looks a little different as our church facilities aren't open for the church rotation system that has been in place for over 20 years. Luckily, the new facility, New Promise, opened up before COVID-19 hit with a vengeance. The staff had to be flexible to meet the present needs. Currently, they have 4 families living at the Day House who were in the former rotational program which is stationary at the time; 2 families in transitional housing; and 16 families in the New Promise facility. Each stage has different needs; however, the main purpose is to provide for our homeless families and get them off the street and out of their cars. New Promise operates in a remodeled motel-style building and the church rotation program is on pause during COVID-19.

Luckily, New Promise received some grant funding to help with the staffing of this NEW program and I believe there are only 2 in the whole nation. However, they still need donations to make it easier on the families. Because of the restrictions put on by COVID-19, it is difficult to provide ready-made meals. The best way to support is to provide \$25 gift cards to Safeway (as that is their neighborhood grocer). The families have a small fridge and microwave in their living space.

New Promise can also use donations of cleaning supplies. They can use hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes.

**Inside-Out Youth Services**– Things are going well as far as the adults (and volunteers) are concerned. They stay in touch with the kids who have access to computers in a myriad of creative ways. At least two of the paid staff work to keep non-wired kids in the loop. In June Nancy will be attending a ZOOM training for trusted adults dealing with vaping.

**El Centro de Los Pobres (immigrants & low income)** Faye will be meeting with Sister Nancy to deliver the King Soopers cards that have been collected. This totaled \$1175. Even though Los Pobres hasn't opened back up, Sister Nancy is still in social distancing contact with many who count on Los Pobres.

## Mission

**One Nation Walking Together-**Judy reported that they need canned goods and will run a food drive when we are back in the facility. In the meantime, if you wish you may make a canned food donation directly; 3150 N Nevada Dr.

We are proudly a United Church of Christ “5 for 5” congregation! The Christmas Fund – Neighbors in Need – Our Church’s Wider Mission – One Great Hour of Sharing – Strengthen the Church.

We have met all nine of our quarterly financial commitments.

**Homeless Bags-** Thank you to folks who donated items to Jerima’s mission of Sandwiches and Smiles. These items are distributed once a month in Memorial Park.

**Budget-** All of our quarterly financial commitments have been met. Thanks to the folks who pledge to our Mission budget.

## Facilities Report

### FACILITY MAINTENANCE



During this time of absence from public activities in our building, the Facilities Team along with several partners have been social distancing and handling building responsibilities.

A schedule was put in place to have one person visit the building each day to check on general maintenance and safety.

The altar steps have been sanded and varnished – thanks to Carol and Richard Burbank, John Tinsley, and Dave Bristow.

The outdoor cleanup resulted in weeding, grass trimming, and general cleanup – thanks to 13 folks. A big shout out to Carolyn who rode the lawn mower.

The Fire Alarm Safety check took more time and energy than expected. After 3 work orders, we are now in compliance. Thanks to John T for meeting the technician each time!

There are more projects scheduled throughout the summer. If more hands are needed, the projects will be mentioned in the weekly e-blast.

### VISTA GRANDE PLEDGED GIVING for Jan—May 2020

Funds	Pledged	Received	Difference
General Operating	34,316.67	34,664.37	347.70
Mission/Outreach	7,789.58	7,549.00	-240.58

## Covenantal Partners

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### June Birthdays

1	Dana Zimmerman
2	Kamryn Hollins
17	Khloe Hollins
19	Lyn Gunning
23	Julia Hollins
25	Doug Capps

### June Anniversaries:

June 11	Bob and Nancy Hollins
June 15	Matt and Erin Spencer
June 16	Clare Twomey and Liz Bliss
June 19	Jerry and Jackie Moore Happy 60th

### July Birthdays

1	Anna Salmela
7	Bob Hollins
8	Sara Weatherman
9	Valerie Karr
15	Judy Druelinger
15	Jerry Moore
25	Faye Gallegos
30	Deborah Tinsley

### July Anniversaries:

July 3	Maggie and Ron Forth
July 6	John and Linda Allen
July 18	Jim and Bev Price
July 24	Katherine Matzen/Nathan Andersen
July 26	Tammie Davis and Ruth Eastwood
July 28	Chase and Melissa Bongirno

### August Birthdays

1	Carol Burbank
5	Trish King
7	Kathryn Romberg
8	Katherine Fatica
19	Lorraine Capps
20	Judy Gibson
20	Gabriel Martin
23	Phil Puterbaugh
24	Grayson Barnes
27	Sebastian Bongirno
27	Clare Twomey
28	Jimmy Collins

### August Anniversaries:

August 2	Crystal and Joel Karr
Aug 17	Kathryn and Willie Romberg
Aug. 19	Jimmy and Brenda Collins
Aug. 29	Mel and Judy Druelinger



# BLACK LIVES MATTER

## Vista Grande Vigil in Support of Black Lives Matter

There was joy and the happy sound of children's voices in Acacia Park on Saturday June 13<sup>th</sup> when a large crowd of families and others gathered for the Young Peoples March. The organizers had dancing, art, poetry reading, lots of snacks and cool water for the hot day. Vista Grande participated by supplying the poster boards for the art project and supported the endeavor in another, more unique way: *Silence*.

Eighteen Friends and Covenantal Partners gathered to stand in silence for one hour, holding up signs with the names of people of color killed by the police. Four times the silence was broken by the announcement of the start of observing 8 minutes and 46 seconds. During this time some stood, some knelt, and one lay prone on the ground with hands behind her back. This is the amount of time that it took for a police officer to strangle George Floyd. And 8:46 was the time it took to finally get a nation to rise up, to take to the streets, to say "Not One More" and to demand change to systems of unequal justice that began in times of slavery and continues to this day.

This isn't a "usual" newsletter article. But Vista Grande isn't a "usual" church. Vista Grande doesn't sit in a pew and say "Something should be done." Vista Grande is active, involved, and engaged. From the White Privilege class, Sacred Conversations To End Racism (SC2ER) training that is now an established Institute led by our own Pastor Clare, to the continued involvement of our Mission Ministry Team within the community of Colorado Springs and beyond, Vista Grande takes seriously, personally, and communally the call to "...*do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.*" (Micah 6:8) It has been challenging as we have confronted our own unconscious bias and racism, but it has been done and it continues: We hold each other in loving support as we move beyond what we were taught or what we grew up with to what can be when we bring our best selves to the issues of our time and we dig deep with a response rooted in the Gospel.

You, each of you, Friend and Covenantal Partner, supports the work of discipleship financially, spiritually, and physically as you are able. God bless the work; God be with each of you.

Pastor Deborah

## VISION TEAM

In April the Vision Ministry Team presented a vision statement to the Executive Council, which was accepted as Vista Grande's Vision for the future. To be sure, it is not etched in stone, and can be adapted or even rewritten to meet the changes (who anticipated the last months??) that may confront the community.

A vision statement is a yearning for the future we want to build, a direction in which to aim, a statement of values that prod us to be the best we know we can be as a community of faith, and more.

To the many who have been a part of this, from the World Café of December 2018 up to March of this year, more than gratitude to each of you. This was a true collaboration over a long time, with challenging side trips and some blind alleys, but always with humor, deep theological questioning, and some good food!

To any who would enjoy the work of pulling together a Mission Statement for the church, integrating the mission of Education, Justice and Peace, Mission, Worship, and so much more that makes us uniquely who we are, please jump right in to Vision group by sending your email address to me: no previous experience required! This is open to both Covenantal Partners and Friends of the church.

The Vision Statement is presented here with the hope it will spark your thinking, your contemplating and encourage you to see where you might best be invested in the life and work of the community as we move forward together.

In gratitude and thanksgiving,

Pastor Deborah  
Revdeborah2@gmail.com

The logo features the year '2020' in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The first '2' is olive green, the first '0' is light green, the second '2' is teal, and the second '0' is dark teal. Below the year, the word 'VISION' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A bright white light flare is positioned between the two '0's of '2020', creating a lens flare effect.



# 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.

## **VG's** Cleaning Schedule - on hold

The building remains vacant.

We are trying to keep up with necessary light duties.

We haven't forgotten you.

We'll reach out when it's time to do a deep clean before re-entering.





**Vista Grande  
United Church of Christ**

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**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.”