

The Vista Views

Inside this issue



ARTICLE 45

Feb. Mar. Apr 2021

Transformation by Rev Clare Twomey

**Transformation can only happen in the context of relationship. That is the message which undergirds the gospel story of Jesus and the Syrophencian woman. She demanded that Jesus see and hear her and in his humility he did both. Her daughter is healed and he has expanded his world view to include those previously ignored. This radical transformation, experienced by both, describes a moment of liberation. A moment which demonstrated his humility and her faith cementing a relationship previously unimaginable. This invitation to transformative relationships relates to all relationships: one another, our loved ones, our ancestors, the places from which we come, and our Beloved.*

Beloved Community, as we enter yet another Lenten season, we are once again invited into the possibility of experiencing transformation: that experience where we find ourselves often unexpectedly on the receiving end of an invitation to change in such a way that reaches into our souls and grounds us in the embrace of the Divine. It's what we read about when Jesus 'listens' to the Syrophencian woman; when a prophet finally accepts their call; when Mary proclaims that her heart magnifies the Divine; when Peter has the realization of who Jesus is; when those on the way to Emmaus, have that 'aha' moment of recognizing Jesus. Each of these transformative experiences propelled all of these people into a way of being in the world which was more in line with how our God envisions us to be.

To be clear, while these are stories with which we are familiar, they are also representative of how difficult allowing ourselves to be transformed can be. The prophets all entered their callings kicking and screaming challenging God's wisdom all the way! We know that Peter was a hard sell throughout his tenure with Jesus. It took quite a while for those on the road to actually hush up long enough to 'see' the presence of God in Jesus. The account of Mary seems to offer a bit more humility, (though one must ask, is it humility or resignation of a woman in first century Palestine portrayed by an author whose bias it is for women to do what they are told!?—oops, I do digress). The point is, allowing relational transformation is really hard work. It requires, first and foremost, humility. It requires a personal acknowledgement that perhaps we don't know it all. It demands that we show up, not only for those with whom we are in good relationship, but with those with whom we are in conflict or estranged.

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Special points of interest:

ZOOM

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



Visit the website at www.rmcucc.org for the many workshops offered to you. Upcoming events include:

The Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration will take place over the week of June 7 – 13, 2021. The meeting will be held virtually again this year.

The Business Meeting will be held on Saturday, June 12, 2021. The RMC will provide a conference-wide worship experience on Sunday, June 13.

We are a faith community of 73 United Church of Christ congregations in Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming who support and nurture one another in local and wider ministry and mission. The United Church of Christ is an open and welcoming denomination of 5,000 churches and nearly 900,000 members that proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ, celebrates diversity, honors the gifts of all people, and seeks justice and peace for everyone.

Vista Grande's Vision Statement - adopted April 13, 2020

"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 for all of God's Creation."

Our Staff

Lead Pastor—Rev. Clare Twomey

Pastor Mallory Everhart

Music Director— COVID—19 Dismissal

Office Administrator—Donna Bristow

Nursery Attendant— COVID—19 Dismissal

Security Specialist—Timotheus Cross

Lead Pastor's Hours

Office hours are flexible.

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

2021 Executive Committee:

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

The next newsletter will be the May/June/July 2021 edition.
Deadline for articles is April 15. E-mail your articles to admin@vgcc.org

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It will challenge us to visit uncomfortable places, acknowledging where we were pained and where we caused pain. It challenges us to explore beyond our comfort and listen to the voices we have been ignoring. And even after all this, we may learn that not everything is within our power to fix or heal. This realization can also be very transformational.

So where do we begin?

I invite you to enter into this Lenten season by first embracing the humility it takes to allow yourselves to be transformed. Ask yourselves:

Where do I need to be stretched in terms of going beyond what I think I know about God

Where are those places in my life where I have not listened?

Where have I allowed my sense of moral superiority to miss opportunity for relationship?

Where have I let my internal biases direct my understanding of the “Other”?

Where have I ignored invitations into relationships because it would be difficult?

Where have I insisted on relationship where there isn’t one or where being in relationship is actually more damaging than ending it?

Where...(insert question here)

Lent is the season to begin/return to this work. It is the season of repentance --that is turning around from those ways which have been problematic, (read sinful), and instead moving closer to our Beloved. We will not always get it right. We will never be finished. But we will be together on this journey.

Blessings and courage this season, Dear Ones. Let the transformation begin!

*(This paragraph opens the sabbatical application we sent in to the Lilly foundation last year)

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

Use the Zoom link to join in.

The best way to get this link is through our website.

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



Ash Wednesday
— Lent Begins

Clare Twomey is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Ash Wed

Time: Feb 17, 2021 05:30 PM Mountain Time
(US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9115878719>

News from Mallory

Greetings, Vista Grande UCC family –

First and foremost, I want to thank each of you for your vote of confidence in extending me a call to be your Associate Pastor. This faith community is so important to me and has been an integral part of my formation as a minister. Serving among you is truly a joy and I have such immense gratitude that you have asked me to continue my work with you. I am so excited to walk together and discover what the Spirit has in store!

As you may know, I am hosting twice-weekly conversations from now through the end of May on a variety of topics pertaining to the life of the church. We are covering a range of material, including core values, church history, worship, programming, our building, and our dreams for the future. I encourage you to join us and be part of the conversations. They have been fun, insightful, informative, and full of wonder, appreciation, and joy. It doesn't matter if you've missed a few – pop in and see what it's all about! Your voice is necessary because we wouldn't be us without you!

One of my favorite conversations was when we discussed the history and legacy of Vista Grande. It's my contention that we can't faithfully navigate the future if we don't honor our history. While preparing for the session, Donna, our archivist extraordinaire, sent me several firsthand accounts and reflections from people who were part of VGUCC's founding as well as a handful of mission and vision statements the congregation has discerned at significant checkpoints in the history of the church. Looking through these documents and participating in these conversations gave me a true appreciation for how our identity has persisted over nearly five decades. Though the language we've used to describe ourselves has evolved, we have always remained committed to **spiritual and intellectual growth, making the world a better place, showing up authentically, giving of ourselves, and getting things done.**

You and I are the beneficiaries of the heart and tenacity of courageous, visionary people who unshakably believed in the necessity of their mission, even when others told them to give up. We as a church are incredibly lucky that several of those who worked to found and foster this community are still among us. They hold a unique perspective on the mission and vision of Vista Grande and there is so much to learn from them which can instruct and inform the way we approach the future. A goal of mine in my new position as Associate Pastor is to interview and record the testimonies of those in our congregation who helped found the church so their wisdom can be preserved for the those who will come after us. It will be an invaluable resource for future generations of VG covenantal partners. As United Methodist Bishop Karen Oliveto said "We are the ancestors of the future church." May we dream audaciously on their behalf.

In abiding joy,
Pastor Mallory

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT! with Mallory

As 2021 gets underway, the Vista Grande community will be doing a deep dive into who we are, to whom we belong, and where we're going and WE NEED YOU! Over the next several months, Mallory will be hosting a series of conversations on a wide-ranging variety of topics, including VGUCC history and important figures, our values and mission, our building and land, theology and faith formation, worship, and more!

Missed one – no problem. You are invited to Zoom in when you can.

Check your weekly e-blasts for the Zoom link.

Faith Formation for Adults

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

The next book that we will tackle will be Caste by Isabel Wilkerson.

Caste is a 2020 nonfiction book in which prize-winning journalist Isabel Wilkerson argues that the United States operates under a caste system based on race.

“Wilkerson compares the United States to India and Nazi Germany, examining the similarities and differences between each nation’s caste system.

Through her “Eight Pillars of Caste,” Wilkerson explains what a caste system entails and how caste perpetuates itself through dehumanization and division.

Drawing on history, research, and personal anecdotes, Wilkerson explores the dire consequences of caste and proposes “radical empathy” as the solution..”



As usual all are welcome, whether or not you’ve read the book. We meet around 8:30 on zoom before the worship service. (During COVID, you’ll have to “percolate” your own coffee.)

Financial Report for January 2021



Funds	Pledged	Received	Difference
General Operating	6,589.17	6,274.85	- 314.32
Mission Outreach	1,864.58	860.00	- 1,004.58

Did you miss Vista Grande’s Annual Report which acknowledged and celebrated events in 2020?

Check out the report on the cover page of the church’s website

<http://vgcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2020-AnnualReport-1.pdf>

Hello Partners.

Welcome to 2021! Many people have been looking forward to this year, mostly as a means of hope for better things to come than 2020, and for some literally to be able to put 2020 behind. Either way it is here, and we have arrived with it. I personally am grateful and honored that we arrived together.

The 2021 Annual Meeting and report presented us with abundant evidence of our strength as a faith community. In the face of much adversity, we have held strong. Not only for ourselves, but; with as much commitment that we have continuously garnered for all the communities we support, we have held each other strong. This is the evidence I invite each of us to carry in our hearts, hands and heads everyday this year.

In that invitation, I would like us to allow ourselves to notice both the strength and challenges we've experienced together last year. A big challenge has been not being able to gather weekly in person. As challenging as that has been, I want everyone to know and remember that it has been that challenge which has called upon many of us to commit to the individual responsibility of being part of something greater than ourselves.....each one of us makes this faith community we know as Vista Grande.

Our time spent Zooming on Sundays, Tuesdays, now Wednesdays and occasional Saturdays in the parking lot has been such a new way of gathering for us. And yet, I see your strength at every gathering. I see it because you're there. In the absence of being able to show up as you have in the past to be with our Missions, the budget and the pie charts show your strength in service to others. Each and every shared expression of your lives and hearts to each other; joys and concerns, post cards, greeting cards, chat notes, tech support and phone calls have kept our strength and gotten us here.

As we move forward in 2021 with much anticipation of moving past the challenges and heartaches of 2020, I want us to remember and notice the parts and the hearts that came together in the midst of it all and sustained us and our community. I pray for the Divine to hold us in the realization of who we are and what we can do even in the muck. Covid has been devastating. Waiting for life to be different has been devastating as well. I pray for us all, a daily awareness of our strength that is greater than the waiting of 2020. Stay strong together and stay prepared to be the disciples we are required to be.

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.

Local Missions we are continuing to serve Inside-Out, Family Promise, Los Pobres and One Nation Walking Together. We are adding Smiles and Sandwiches (in kind giving) and the Chinook Center for one quarter to start with.



Los Pobres holds a clinic on Tuesdays in the morning and is open for rent and utilities assistance. It is open on Thursday afternoons for rice and beans.

Our Lenten Special Giving ... Between Feb 17 and April 4, if you are able, purchase a \$25 Walmart gift card and mail it to Vista Grande UCC PO Box 26030 Colorado Springs, CO 80936-6030 Attn: John Tinsley. These will be distributed to the families that Los Pobres serves in Pueblo.

Family Promise has its 24th Annual Hope, Hearts and Home fundraising luncheon on Sunday, February 28th. Vista Grande has reserved a virtual table for 8

<https://familypromise.org/>

Inside-Out – Nancy reported that she took 25 masks to Inside-Out. Linda, a friend of Maggie Jusell's, donated these masks. Jerima is making Paracord Rainbow Bracelets for Inside-Out.
<https://www.insideoutys.org/youth/>

One Nation Walking Together still accepts donations and does give some things to Los Pobres.
<https://www.onenationwt.org/>

In kind items for Sandwiches and Smiles are being collected by Nancy Morlock-Hollins. There is a collection box on her porch at 7649 Safari Cir. Colorado Springs, CO 80920. These items include: warm coats, blankets, individually wrapped snacks, toiletries. Check out the website for other items.

<http://vgcc.org/mission-and-social-justice/>

Covenantal Partners

New Covenantal Partners who joined Vista Grande February 23, 2020.

These folks should have been welcomed and celebrated in the 2020 April/May newsletter. Because of COVID, there wasn't a newsletter compiled at that time.
Thanks to Katherine F for asking about these bios.

So now we welcome ...

Linda Coonley

Linda transferred her church membership from Concord NC after she relocated to Colorado Springs and began attending Vista Grande. Linda was married to Kirk for a long time (her words!) and has a daughter, a son, two sons-in-law and four grandchildren; ages 13-17. Unfortunately, Kirk passed away in Nov 2020 from cancer before we really got to know him. Her favorite activities are reading and participating in book clubs, followed by hiking. She was a reference librarian and manager until she retired in 2007. Our rainbow flag attracted Linda to Vista Grande and she soon found out VG was a great place to think, to doubt, to experience inclusiveness, and love.

Katherine Fatica

Katherine is a very resourceful person. She worked for nonprofits helping the less fortunate. Her latest workplace was Area Agency on Aging and Independence Center. She loves walking with her dogs in the woods and has been arrested in Animal Rights protests. Katherine is a master in face painting. Our Black Lives Matter flag attracted her to Vista Grande.

Katherine Matzen; Corinne and Kaya

Katherine loves spending time in the mountains with her family. She is a school psychologist and has two girls with her husband, Nathan Anderson. She was drawn to Vista Grande from the pride flag that we fly proudly. She hopes that we can grow the church's message of acceptance throughout Colorado Springs.

Tiffany McGee; Claire

Tiffany and her daughter Claire attended in person church many times in 2019 and Claire sang with the choir for a few weeks before school activities took over.

Then COVID hit and we were all confined to our homes. You'll see Tiffany regularly on Zoom worship.

Erin and Matt Spencer; Lincoln and TJ

Erin and Matt enjoy music and musical theatre. They play piano, flute, and trombone. They also enjoy playing board games. Matt works at Schriever AFB and Erin teaches flute and piano. They have two sons; Lincoln loves trains, Batman, and Zelda. TJ loves cookie monster, trucks, and food! They liked the church values and hope to participate in music and missions as possible.

Covenantal Partners

Amanda Udis-Kessler

Amanda works at Colorado College as a mid-level college administrator after a short career as a sociology professor. She studied the LGBTQ+ inclusion struggle in the United Methodist Church for her dissertation which was later published. Amanda came to Vista Grande after spending 30 years as a Unitarian Universalist. She was very involved as a lay preacher in the UU Church.

Amanda is a gifted musician. She has three albums of original songs and hymns and a number of published hymns, responsive readings, and sermons. She attended Iliff School of Theology in Denver briefly while considering UU ministry. She's working on finding ways to put her creativity, passion, and talents to work at Vista Grande.

Amanda became a covenantal partner as she felt that Vista Grande was a place she could grow, serve others, connect to community, and be strengthened for justice work. Amanda is married to her longtime partner.

Rev Bob Kinsley

Bob transferred his church membership to Vista Grande UCC at the end of February 2020. He is an ordained minister and longtime UCCer and was involved in Wash Park UCC in Denver for many years. After he moved to Colorado Springs, he decided to attend church closer to home. However, shortly after making that decision, COVID hit and we all were attending church from home. Bob Kinsey is active in Environmental Justice ministry.

As you have just read, we have a wealth of spiritual gifts that we need to tap into when COVID-19 is part of our past.



Covenantal Partners

On Sunday January 31, 2021 we welcomed several folks as covenantal partners.

Jerima King

Jerima King is originally from Panama. She came to the US, the first time, as a high school exchange student. She lived with a family in Iowa. She met her husband at a Lutheran youth conference. They attended the same high school.

Jerima attended a few protests in the community and met a few members of Vista Grande. Her hope is to continue to learn and be active in the mission program at Vista Grande. Jerima's passion is also "Sandwiches and Smiles", a mission that offers support to our homeless community in center town.

Timotheus Cross and Elisia Garcia-Salazar

Timotheus is the security specialist at Vista Grande. He and Elisia just had their first child, Josiah Cross on January 23.. They hope to be able to raise their son in a church that believes in "A Just World for All."

David and Denise Lee

David and Denise shared a very thorough bio. In paraphrase ...

David grew up in western rural North Dakota. He grew up in a Lutheran Church, attended college on a ROTC scholarship and enjoyed a 20-year career in the Air Force focused on space and high technology. He taught physics at the AFA for 3 years. He now works as a civilian on Schriever Air Force Base.

David and Denise met in college and have been married 31 years. They have 2 sons age 18 and 20. They also have 2 dogs who enjoy being walked in the beautiful alpine area where they call home off Monument Hill. On Saturdays, David volunteers with Colorado Horsepower where he engages in equine therapy with differently-abled kids and adults. He also enjoys running a Zoom book club that discusses many theology-related books. Many of which our adult faith formation class has studied over the past decade.

David looks forward "to living out his values in a way that challenges his comfort zone and helps Vista Grande be a beacon to the rest of the community."



Covenantal Partners and Friends

February Birthdays

- 5 BC
- 11 Sandra Gates
- 15 TJ (Truman James) Spencer
- 18 Linda Allen
- 19 Jerima King
- 27 Lori Gardner
- 28 Rosemary McBride



March Birthdays

- 17 Amy Gunning
- 20 Jon Forshee

April Birthdays

- 2 Nancy Morlock-Hollins
- 2 Liz Bliss
- 3 Kaya Matzen Anderson
- 16 Donna Bristow
- 17 Carolyn Gunning
- 18 Jax Hyatt
- 20 Jane Andresano
- 22 Robin Lamoreaux
- 27 Caroline Boulette
- 30 Sami Solomon-Klebba

Anniversaries!

February 14 Carol and Phil Puterbaugh

March 20 Carol and Richard Burbank

April 1 Denise and David Lee

April 23 Erin and Jon Elkaim

April 27 Audrey and Luke



The Facilities Team has been using COVID time to complete some much needed building chores. They just finished stripping the concrete floors of 30 years of use and refinished with a lacquer to protect the concrete. All the sanctuary chairs have been cleaned and are ready for in person worship – when it's safe to do so.



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."