



“Transformation can only happen in the context of relationship. That is the message which undergirds the gospel story of Jesus and the Syrophenician 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.”

This is the opening paragraph of the grant I submitted to the Lilly Endowment for the sabbatical monies we received. This statement undergirds the rationale for the process and activities in which I, and you the congregation, will be participating. I strongly encourage you to read the grant in its entirety so that you will fully understand what we are doing as a community seeking to become a Racial Justice church.

The page is <http://vgcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Sabbatical.pdf>

These past months we have engaged in a deep dive, of sorts, within our worship in order to begin to ingest, digest and understand the depths and breathe of racial injustice in our country. The purpose of my pilgrimages while I am gone is to further my understanding by immersing myself in what I am calling ‘sacred geography’. Throughout my studies over these years I have become painfully aware of how ancestry is at best diminished, and at worst annihilated, by the impact of white skin supremacy. Native peoples have been genocided and have been relegated to a place of invisibility, their ancestors decimated and burial grounds destroyed. People of African descent have been stolen from their ancestry, and torn from the places that hold that sacred memory of those who came before. Those of us who immigrated to this country in one century or another, have probably lost some semblance of where we are from and who our people were because of the need to assimilate once our people arrived on these shores. I know from where the DNA of my people come but not much more about my ancestors. We have all become lost in this evil which demands that we give up our identity in order to belong to a system which would have us believe that some of us are better than others.

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The Vista Views

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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.rmucc.org



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 2021 Annual Celebration and Business Meeting of the Rocky Mountain Conference is less than 60 days away! The theme this year is ***Church Anew***.

Virtual events will commence on **June 7 and continue through June 13** with a concluding all-Conference worship service. The Annual Business Meeting will begin on June 12, at 8:30 am.

VGUCC can have **Three DELEGATES**. Would you like to be a delegate? Please contact **Kayan Cross**, our moderator if you are interested Kayan.Kan.Do@gmail.com

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 August September October 2021 edition.
Deadline for articles is October 15. E-mail your articles to admin@vgcc.org

My three planned trips over the summer are crafted so as to connect with different geographic locations so as to at least become more connected to the lands made sacred by the events which have been instilled into their memory. The first leg will be to Montgomery Alabama, representing the heart of the south, the sacred earth where souls were bought and sold for profit and where appropriate monuments stand to remind us of this sin.

The second leg will be to the Smithsonian to visit those artifacts which hold the truth about the origins of the myth of race, white skin supremacy, and of Native and African descended peoples. Part of this trip will also bring me to Cambridge MD, home to the Harriet Tubman Museum and the beginning of the Freedom Trail in MD and DE. This part of sacred geography ties to that place from which I and my family came and still consider home. It is a sacred place for more reasons than just its football team!

The last leg will be a trip for my wife and me to Ireland. We both claim this Emerald Island as our ancestral home but have little knowledge about our people who came from here. This part of the trip will allow for spiritual connection to this sacred geography as well as a long awaited opportunity for us to relax and enjoy time together.

This is just a brief summary of what and why I am doing what I am doing. And you all will be participating in a parallel program while I am gone. On June 6th, my last Sunday before I go off grid for 3 months, we will be able to have some robust conversation about what will happen here during those months. Until then, please read the grant application and bring any questions you may have. I would like for this time to be as profoundly inspiring and transformative for you as I am anticipating it will be for me.

NURTURING JUSTICE

DECOLONIZING CHRISTIANITY

Nurturing Justice will officially launch on May 13, 2021 with a discussion with our mentors:

Dr. Velda Love and Dr. Miguel De La Torre

DECOLONIZING CHRISTIANITY: BECOMING BADASS BELIEVERS is Miguel De La Torre's latest book and is sure to spark lively conversation with Dr. Velda Love.

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Register in advance for this meeting at:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYkc-CurzstH9O4JyKTroTfRbWNCz4LYi2c>

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

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

Beloveds,

When I wrote to you last, you had just extended me the call to be your associate pastor. After presenting the terms of call to the Committee on Ministry, they voted to approve my application for ordination. As a result, I am pleased to invite all of you to my ordination service on May 23rd at 3pm at First Congregational Church. It will be a hybrid service and have both in-person and online options for attendance. I would love for you to participate in whatever way feels comfortable for you. More details to follow.

When it comes to our life together, I am so excited for what is to come! In the immediate, that looks like finishing up the conversations we have been having twice weekly since January. They have been a wonderful opportunity to build community and dream together and will lead to the re-formation of a visioning committee to help guide VGUCC into the future. It has truly been a privilege to spend this time together. If you've been meaning to make it to the conversations but haven't yet, it's not too late! We'd love to have you and hear your perspective.

On June 6th, we send Clare off on her sabbatical journey and begin our own discernment and growth work. Through a variety of spiritual and educational experiences, we will deepen our understanding of what it means to stand in solidarity with our Black and brown siblings and chart a course toward embodying our commitment to justice. It will be a challenging summer, I am sure, but I expect it to be deeply transformational and shape our ministry for years to come. For more information, read Clare's article and take a look through the sabbatical grant application.

During Clare's sabbatical, we will also be laying the groundwork for a safe return to in-person worship. We are in the midst of creating a team to work on the details and logistics – if that sounds like something you're interested in helping with, please reach out to Kayan! Though the autumn might feel like a long way away, we will be so engaged in our work over the summer that it will be here before you know it. I can't wait to be together! I am especially excited for those who've become covenantal partners since the beginning of the pandemic to be able to attend worship in 3D!

As we contemplate what comes next, the powerfully important task before us is to gather up all we have learned and experienced and amalgamate it into an incarnate vision for Vista Grande's future. Though part of me aches to return to something that feels "normal", I believe it is the work of people of Spirit and Faith to dream big and step boldly into what is to come. We have been given an opportunity to radically re-think how and why we do what we do and deepen our commitment to building the world we dream of. It's hard work. It's exhausting. It can be uncomfortable and emotional and taxing. But the sustaining gift we have is that our committed, vulnerable, courageous family of faith is walking this road together. Together, we can accomplish surprising and beautiful things.

Above all, I hope you know how honored I am to be your pastor and to continue sharing in your lives. This is an incredible community and I am blessed to be part of it. If you want to connect, I am available for pastoral care, phone or Zoom calls, park walks, and more. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at mallorypeverhart@gmail.com or 303-886-3149 if I can be of service to you or your family. Each of you continue to be in my prayers.

Yours in fellowship and solidarity,

Pastor Mallory

The Southeastern Association of
the Rocky Mountain Conference of
the United Church of Christ
cordially invites you to attend

The Ordination of Mallory Paige Everhart

May 23rd, 2021 at 3 o'clock
First Congregational Church
20 East St. Vrain Street
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Please RSVP to the attached link.
Virtual and in-person attendance options are available.
COVID safety protocols will be in place and masks
will be required for in-person attendance.

Clergy are invited to wear red stoles and participate in a processional.

<https://app.easytithe.com/App/Form/3be0f22c-7cfe-4153-b27c-aab5ac21f294>



Save the Date – Women’s Fellowship – Our Fall Retreat

Saturday September 18 at La Foret. If all goes well with COVID numbers and vaccinations, we’ll be “live”; otherwise we’ll be via Zoom. Save the date either way.

Retreat Facilitator: Sara Weatherman

Moderator Message— Kayan Cross

The Executive Council along with Pastor Clare, and Mallory have decided to begin the process of discerning what to do and how to do it in terms of reconvening in our worship space. It has been a very long 14 months. In spite of this time we seem to be steadfast and strong in our worshipping together.

We will be working on creating as safe as possible space in the building as well as how to do in person worship in the sanctuary while continuing to offer online worship. This allows for all who want to participate, whether, comfortable in the sanctuary or not, to do so.

I am asking Covenantal Partners who are interested in being part of the discussions and planning for this return to the building to contact me by May 15. Kayan.kan.do@gmail.com ; 719-221-4479. At that time I will schedule our first zoom meeting. And we can begin the actual process of taking steps towards the sanctuary.

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 have maintained our relationships with our six local missions (The Chinook Center, Inside-Out Youth Services, Family Promise, Los Pobres, One Nation Walking Together, and Smiles and Sandwiches) even during this pandemic. During Lent we contributed 46 Walmart gift cards for Los Pobres. For the second Sunday of each month, we collect water, toilet paper, snacks etc. to fill the bags for un-housed folks through Smiles and Sandwiches. We are celebrating the fact that once again, we were able to meet ALL our financial commitments for the 1st quarter



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, toilet-ries. Check out the website for other items.

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

Family Promise

Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN): Family Shelter (High Barrier – Families must qualify) Our Interfaith Hospitality Network was greatly impacted by COVID-19, with our congregational rotation being suspended on March 15th, 2020 to ensure the health and safety of our volunteers and families. We originally anticipated this suspension lasting 8-12 weeks, and with COVID-19 continuing to spike and affect our community, the hosting rotation continues to be suspended through February 2021. During this same timeframe, our Day House closed to public and continues to have restricted access to ensure we are providing the safest accommodations possible to the four guest families in our IHN program.

We are proud that while some similar programs around the nation suspended their services in response to COVID-19, we were agile and diligent in ensuring we were able to safely continue to serve families without reducing capacity, and in fact increased capacity for almost three months. From March 15th through May 12th, we had our four IHN families in “scatter site” accommodations, with two of our families utilizing transitional homes at Mount St. Francis, and two of our families staying in the basement at the New Promise Family Shelter. In the beginning of May, with no end of COVID-19 in sight, we made the decision to adjust our operations to sustain through the pandemic longer term. We moved our operational offices (CEO, Director of Development, Director of Operations, and Volunteer Manager) out of the IHN Day House and relocated them to the basement at the New Promise Family Shelter and moved our Bookkeeping workstation and IHN Family Services Manager’s offices to the combined offices upstairs. This freed up space to transition three of the offices and the quiet room into bedrooms for IHN Guest Families.

In May, we successfully reengaged our congregational partners (both host and support) in providing meals to our IHN families. From March 15th through mid-May, our congregational partners provided financial support, gift cards, and continued to support this program; however, we recognized the importance of continuing to engage our amazing volunteers, and that the costs of meals for our IHN families was not going to be sustainable long term. Currently, our congregational partners are following their designated Host weeks in providing three prepared dinners per week, and the supplies for breakfast, lunch, and snacks for the full week. We have collaboratively scaled meal delivery back from seven nights a week in May to five nights a week in September, to the status quo of three nights a week. We found that this alleviated food waste, and food storage capacity issues. Congregations have also supported our guest families through provisions of grocery gift cards, cash donations, and restaurant gift cards in lieu of meal delivery when this worked better for the volunteers.

IHN Day House 519 North Tejon Street,
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

New Promise Family Shelter
1647 South Nevada Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80905
<https://familypromise.org/>



Covenantal Partners

1 Timotheus Cross
15 Emma Moreland
16 Matt Spencer
19 Maggie Jusell
19 Dave Lee
21 Kevin Gardner
22 Carol Wisely
23 Mallory Everhart
27 Justin Hollins
27 Brason Spaniol Karr
30 Dick Burbank
30 Erin Spencer

June Birthdays

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

July Birthdays

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

May Anniversaries:

May 22 Max and Maurine Hale
May 22 Joshua and Carrie Barnes
May 29 Dave and Donna Bristow



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

July Anniversaries:

July 24 Katherine Matzen/Nathan Andersen
July 26 Tammie Davis and Ruth Eastwood
July 28 Chase and Melissa Bongirno

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

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.)



Percolate is reading Caste-The Origins of Our Discontents by Isabel Wilkerson. Once again we find ourselves asking “why didn’t I know this already?” She makes a distinction between a caste system that controls so much of our lives and our behaviors, and race, which is a contrived concept. Her words also lead us into lively discussions on other racial justice issues.

On Saturday April 3 we gathered for a social distance Easter Egg Hunt.

8 children hunted for eggs while 23 parents, grandparents, a great-grandparent, aunt, uncle, and church covenantal partners watched the kids spread out to gather eggs.

Pastor Clare read a story about a fuzzy caterpillar.

Thank you to the 10 folks who purchased eggs and fillings to make the hunt a fun time for all and to Pastor Clare who told the story.

**FACILITY
MAINTENANCE**



Outdoor Workday - Saturday May 8 from 9 a.m. – Noon.

We will be trimming, raking, spraying weeds, and trash pickup. We really need some able bodies who can climb a tall ladder and go up on the roof! Hope to see you all there! Bring gloves, hat, sunscreen and mask if needed.

Financial Report for January - March 2021

Funds	Pledged	Received	Difference
General Operating	19,767.50	23,036.05	3,268.55
Mission Outreach	5,593.75	5,144.16	449.59



**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.”