



The Vista Views

Greetings Beloved Community,

Yesterday, as my wife and I were walking in town, I caught the unmistakable smell of the warm air mingling with a hint of some kind of blossom. Perhaps, part of this was my own imagination or desire for spring to arrive sooner than later. Either way it was a welcome feeling! And yet, as I write this, I am aware that we are in the midst of what most of us would call a typical Colorado March. One day we are anticipating some kind of disruptive weather which most forecasters cannot nail down with any kind of confidence. It will most likely include wind, undifferentiated moisture guaranteed to make our travels miserable, and bring frigid temperatures. Then, within 48 hours we will most likely then have a day or two sporting higher temperatures, and the scents and promise of spring and 'sproutings'. One day we may feel as if 'winter' will never give up its hold on us and the next day we find that there is a hint of newness reminding us of potential and sacred hope in what might be. Truly, could we have a better metaphor for the Lenten season—or even just life in general?

I imagine that in the midst of his life, especially in those final months, Jesus was confronted with a myriad of uncertainties. In his world, life was difficult. Poverty was pervasive as was the fear of doing something that could land someone in the crosshairs of the empire. He and his friends traveled from place to place attempting to bring some kind of solace to those who were most vulnerable, while challenging those who would put themselves above others for their own gain. He was indeed, comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. Yet in this precarious time, one thing remains clear: he was never alone. This small band of roguish followers remained mostly true, the tenuous nature their lives bolstered by their loyalty to one another and the word and deeds they were attempting to exhort. We can imagine that, like the uncertainty of this season, there were days filled with fear, and perhaps even the sense of potential heartache and misery. And to be sure there were days which hinted at what might be, the comfort and warmth of the spring sun and the promise of new life.

I must admit that for as much as I can identify the cyclical nature of life with all its joys and laments; as much as I think I understand the profound metaphors offered in nature's seasons, reminding us of that the 'dead of winter' ushers in the new life of spring; as much as I know that grief can eventually give way to joy and repeat again, I often forget.

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Special points of interest:
ZOOM

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



Colorado • Utah • Wyoming

**The Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration –
Thursday June 9 – Saturday June 11, 2022**

The Theme: “Church Anew II” is a continuation of 2021.
The business meeting will be held Saturday
June 11 at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom.

There may be an In-Person Gathering at La Foret in August. More to come!

In the meantime, add June 9 – 11 on your calendars. Also, if you are interested in being a voting delegate, please let Kayan know.

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

Co-Pastor—Rev. Clare Twomey
Co-Pastor — Rev. Mallory Everhart
Office Administrator—Donna Bristow

**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>
Meeting ID: 911 587 8719

2022 Executive Committee:

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

Watch for the monthly news flash each month.

.Beloveds,

We are fully arriving in the Lenten season and looking forward to the seasons of Easter and Pentecost which are to come. Every year, we get to lean into the wisdom of the church year and learn from its rhythms and themes. It is my prayer for us that this year is one we approach with intention, as what has been true within us is made manifest between and beyond us.

As a congregation, we are spending this Lent engaging deeply with the prophetic, lamenting voice of Rev. Dr. James Cone, known as the father of Black liberation theology, specifically through his book *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Much of the language we use about Lent is about journeying and wandering, especially in solidarity with Jesus and his time spent in the desert. It is a time which will challenge us, disrupt us, and deepen us. It strikes me, though, that the energy I hope we bring to this Lenten practice is one of slowness and stillness. That we stay with our feelings. That we not rush by what needs to be attended to and grieved. We are journeying in the stillness. It's an apparent contradiction that strangely makes sense in this season. Our Lenten series will culminate in a **contemplative antiracism retreat being held at La Foret on April 9th**. Here, again, we will learn and practice the art of attending to, staying with, and grieving the suffering racism has caused. I hope you will attend, as these things must be held together in community. Your presence and vulnerability in that space would be a gift.

One of my professors, Dr. Albert Hernandez, taught me that the season between Easter and Pentecost is a powerful time of discernment. In fact, in Arthurian legend, Pentecost was when many of the Knights of the Round Table “got their quest”, usually from a supernatural Other. Our goal is to establish an antiracism team who will help craft a statement so we can assume the mantle of and name for ourselves our identity as an antiracist church.

Though they may appear unconnected, the truth is that our work as an antiracist church is deeply bound up with our work in partnership with Archway Communities and our discernment of supporting an affordable housing development on our land. We have long called ourselves a church which embodies Radical Hospitality which has led us to bravely venture into the work of deconstruction of heterosexism and homophobia, racism, ability and access, mental health, and more. The astounding truth we have discovered in this work is that, through the kinship and calling of God, there is no one who is not our sibling. We are being called to further invest in this work and put it into tangible, life-changing action so we can fully live it out in community with those society has called “other” than us.

I know that the possibility of sharing space and community with new people can be an intimidating prospect, full of questions of whys and hows. As we begin to invest in this process, starting with a first **steering committee meeting on March 22nd at 7pm**, we will also seek to resource ourselves and begin answering some of those how-to questions. In this vein, we will be hosting a **conversation about drug use and addiction through a harm reduction lens, in partnership with the Southern Colorado Health Network on May 14th at 1pm**. I invite you to participate in this process as much as you can – your voice and presence matters and will shape how we go forward as a community.

Overall, I am so grateful to be part of this courageous family of faith who bravely steps forward into the unknown, trusting that God will meet us there and equip us for what is to come. It is a privilege and an honor to be with you on this journey, through Lent and beyond.

Blessings, my friends.

Pastor Mallory

Activities

March 22 at 7 p.m.—Archway Communities Steering Committee - all are invited to participate! Via Zoom at the regular church link,

April 6 (8—10 a.m.) Men's Breakfast (Location to be announced)

April 9 (9 a.m.—4 p.m.) - Contemplative Antiracism Retreat at La Foret
(PLEASE RSVP BY APRIL 1ST)

Email Donna at admin@vgcc.org or call 719-238-0503

April 14—Maundy Thursday (time TBA)

April 17—10 a.m. EASTER (In person and Zoom)

Worship and an EGG HUNT for the kids.

May 14 (1—4 p.m.) Harm Reduction and Narcan Training

June (exact dates TBD) - weekend workshop facilitated by Rev. Nancy Niero on Dismantling White Silence



Men's Breakfast - April 6, 2022; 8am to 10am; Place TBD

Please contact Dick Burbank at 719-598-2256 to let him know you want to attend so the place can be chosen to fit the size of the group. Also, call if you have any questions on this?

We are having an Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday (April 17) immediately following worship. Bring a basket or bag to collect your eggs.

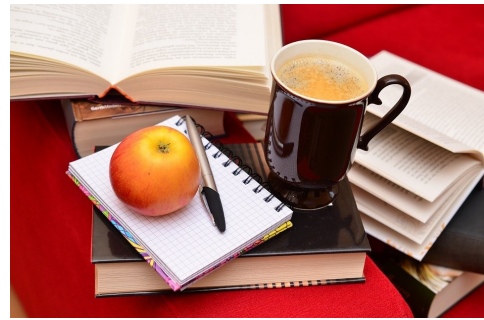
(It's that time again to prepare some Easter eggs for the kids to gather on Easter Sunday.) We ask for the stuffed eggs to be brought to church on Palm Sunday (April 10) or Wednesdays (April 6 and 13) 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.) Please put them in the Church Kitchen Thank you!



Percolate's next Book aka Adult Faith Formation
Percolate meets at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom

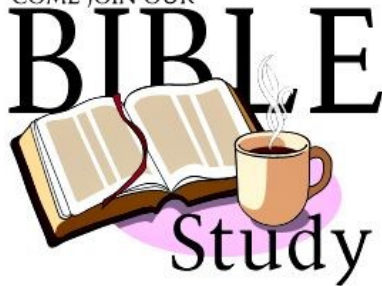
Bridges Out of Poverty by Ruby Payne

Bridges Out of Poverty is a unique and powerful tool “designed specifically for social, health, and legal services professionals. Based in part on Dr. Ruby K. Payne's myth shattering A Framework for Understanding Poverty, Bridges reaches out to the millions of service providers and businesses whose daily work connects them with the lives of people in poverty. In a highly readable format you'll find case studies, detailed analysis, helpful charts and exercises, and specific solutions you and your organization can implement right now to: Redesign programs to better serve people you work with; Build skill sets for management to help guide employees; Upgrade training for front-line staff like receptionists, case workers, and managers; Improve treatment outcomes in health care and behavioral health care; Increase the likelihood of moving from welfare to work. If your business, agency, or organization works with people from poverty, only a deeper understanding of their challenges-and strengths-will help you partner with them to create opportunities for success.



For more information on when this study will occur, email Nancy at nancylmh@gmail.com or chat with her in the Sunday morning Zoom chat.

COME JOIN OUR



Bible Study with Mallory

The study began Thursday Oct 21; however you can pop in at anytime.

That's Thursdays at 7 p.m. by Zoom.

We'll be exploring the Gospel of Mark and we're on Chapter 9.

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 911 587 8719

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.

Our Lenten Special Giving ...

Los Pobres Center. The mission of Los Pobres is to serve the immigrant poor and local indigent citizens by providing those things necessary for survival. Between March 2 and April 10, 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 or put these in the offering plate at VGUCC. These will be distributed to the families that Los Pobres serves in Pueblo.

Spreading Sandwiches and Smiles (SS&S)

Every month (the 2nd Sunday at 1 p.m.) Jerima and her helpers go to Dorchester Park to greet the homeless community and offer them some water and a sandwich. They may have blankets and socks too. They collect donations all month long. So if you want to help out, call Jerima at 719-649-8684

Food Drive - From March 1 through April 30, **One Nation Walking Together** is hosting its Annual Food Drive, with the goal of collecting 10,000 pounds of food. Each box of cereal, each can of soup, each jar of baby food--each and every item of nonperishable food is very much needed and most appreciated. No donation is too small to make a difference. Food items can be dropped off at Vista Grande on Sundays or deliver to Judy Druelinger at 5150 Windgate Ct.

Family Promise at NEW PROMISE

“We had a successful Hope, Hearts, and Home event at Boot Barn Concert Hall on Feb 27! It was fantastic to see our supporters and staff all come together and celebrate 25 years of serving Colorado Springs families!! Perhaps you can join us LIVE in 2023.”

Family Promise is still looking at the pros and cons of the old model of Interfaith Hospitality. The two years of COVID has brought new ideas of how to serve our families who are experiencing homelessness. **The NEW PROMISE Center has been a God-send.**

Our Family Promise supporters are still providing meals from Mon.—Fri. Lately, Family Promise has provided special events (with food, of course.) Family Promise also provides educational classes for the adults and crafty stuff for the kids. 16-20 families are served weekly. Your dollars help give these families a place to call “home.”



**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.”