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Rev. Mallory Everhart

We are
*An Open and Affirming
And Just Peace
Congregation*

We believe
*God's Love is for
All the People*

We respond
Through our Mission Partners

*Congregation at work throughout 2022...
Annual Meeting Jan. 29, 2023*

OUR VISION

"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." adopted April 2020

Living our core values throughout 2022

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2022 Annual Meeting of Vista Grande United Church of Christ

January 30, 2022

11:30 AM

Prayer led by David Nath

Call to order by David Nath. We have a quorum with 47 covenantal partners. Abstains or Nays will be counted to expedite voting.

Approve January 31, 2021 minutes. David Bristow makes a motion to approve minutes. Amanda seconds motion. Motion to approve passes on vote.

Introduction of Executive Council members present: John Tinsley, Dana Zimmerman, Carol Burbank, Jeannie Harrington, Donna Bristow, Kayan Cross, Pastor Clare, Pastor Mallory, Erika Forshee, and David Nath.

Year in Review reports from; Carol Burbank for Members-at-Large, Dave Bristow for Pastoral Relations, Donna Bristow for Administrator, Nancy Morlock-Hollins for Adult Education, Sara Weatherman for Faith Formation, Nancy Morlock-Hollins for Missions Report, Carolyn Gunning for Facilities, Dana Zimmerman for Treasurer.

Thanks to Erin Spencer for facilitating the Facebook page. Thank you for the hard work from the Facilities team from Jan Morgen. Thank you to John Tinsley for his hard work as his tenure as Financial Secretary ends.

Moderator Report from Kayan states VGCC is on better footing after not being in church with a busy past year. Big thanks for the hard work from crews, and committees. Pastor Clare's sabbatical is not complete. Income changes have resulted from losing a previous tenant in South Hall. Pastor Mallory has stepped up on all occasions to which she has been called. David Nath has taken a position as Assistant Moderator.

Staff update reports that Pastor Mallory will be officially installed in February. The positions of Choir Director and Nursery Attendant will not be filled. Amanda Udis-Kessler has volunteered to provide music for worship.

Vision Proposal from Rev. Deborah Tinsley and call for vote. Deborah recalls that March 2016 was the beginning of the Vision Team. This led to workshops, and more work on identifying goals of the congregation. Vision Team also supported work to extend interfaith relationships, and changes in relational work. In 2017, We came to understand that Archway was a value aligned developer. Jeannie shares that buildings and all the issues around them are distracting us from vision. By using assets of the church, including the building, we can better serve our community and our values.

Pastor Mallory leads prayer. Presents vote on an Archway partnership to build affordable housing, and a shared worship space. Deborah Tinsley makes a motion to move forward with Archway partnership conversations. David Bristow seconds the motion. Carol Burbank makes clarification this is a vote to move forward with exploration of Archway possibilities. State the motion- I move that VGUCC move forward with the Archway possibility of moving forward with a value aligned opportunity. Erin shares the positive responses encountered in the community surrounding the possibilities with Archway. Dana shares the fiscal independence this possibility would allow, and how this would allow us to grow into our values. Kayan shares that over fall, he was very housing insecure, and this vote will allow us to carry out our designated missions in respect to homelessness, and mental health. Ann Howard shares she wants to echo Deborah's words. Anne was drawn to church because of mission work and wants to continue. Jerima shares that she is touched by community and partners efforts on helping the unhoused community. Dave Nath calls for vote. Donna tallies votes online. Pastor Clare shares there are no "Nays" or abstentions in person. None online. Motion passes on vote. Pastor Clare speaks of the courage, and bravery of the congregation.

Budget - Call for vote. Dana makes a motion to accept the budget. Jerima seconds the motion. No "Nays" or abstentions. 2022 proposed budget passes.

Presentation of Executive Council Nominees: John Tinsley is leaving his position as Financial Secretary. Jerima King has been nominated. Nomination of Jerima King to Financial Secretary passes on vote.

Reflection on loss for the congregation with a moment of silence for Jim Sailor.

Adjournment initiated by Dave Nath with a motion to end the meeting. Motion to adjourn is seconded by Kayan. Motion passes on vote.

Minutes submitted by Erika Forshee

LEADING WITH CARE

Pastor's Report

Rev. Mallory Everhart

It's that time of year again where we take a moment to reflect on our shared ministry and chart a course for the year ahead. And what year it has been, full of surprise, grief, joy, and communion with one another and with the Divine who is our source and our guide as we seek to follow in the way of Jesus.

At last year's annual meeting, we voted to explore a partnership with Archway Communities, a UCC affiliated developer and management organization, and take steps toward the possibility of developing into a shared affordable housing community. This partnership has gone through some changes, as Archway suffered the grievous loss of their founder and board president, Rev. Robb Lapp, and has had to readjust their vision in the wake of his death. We are still in ongoing conversation, though more slowly and mindfully than previously. At this time, we are pursuing funding for a feasibility study, which will give us needed information about the project's financial and environmental viability. This due diligence is an important step in the process and there are willing partners in the city and county levels and philanthropic community that are behind our dream.

In February, I covenanted with you and with Clare to be your co-pastor and share the gifts and duties of ministry among you. I remain so grateful for the care and generosity you all showed me that day and continue to show me. Little did we know that the co-pastor relationship would be shifting and we would be called upon to release Clare from her installation vows and send her on her next adventure with our love. The executive council asked me to step into the full time pastor position, which I did with joy on June 1st.

Even though I am not a new pastor to you, there is still a period of adjustment that comes with a leadership change. This has shown up in large and small ways, including some shifts in worship and programming, rearrangement of our processes, and reorganizations of our storage. At this moment in time, things are still shifting but I have every faith that they will settle into a sustainable rhythm. At this time, we are investing in fellowship and faith formation, which include our monthly Agape meals, Bible studies of Mark, James, and the Psalms, as well as opportunities for deepening our commitment to antiracism through the Antiracism retreat in April, participating in Rev. Nancy Niero's Dismantling White Silence weekend in August, and the biblical literacy workshop with Sara Weatherman in November.

As a voice and a guide on executive council, I am facilitating a discernment process about our mission and values, assisting our leadership to articulate for themselves who we are and how we want to be in the world. The executive council voted on core values which we believe reflect our purpose as a church:

Connecting with the Divine
Engaging in Community
Fostering Diversity
Embodying our Values
Leading with Care

These core values will inform our decision-making and ensure the choices we make are aligned and within our integrity. I have no doubt they will continue to challenge and uplift us even as they call us toward being Christ's hands and feet here on earth. In accordance with these values, we continue to draw the circle wider and improve our hybrid worship and audiovisual technology. We are always open to feedback and are committed to ensuring accessibility for all!

As always, we are taking our values outside our doors and working to ensure that people in our community know that they are loved and cherished. We use a variety of tools to spread the message of our Loving God, including our roadside sign and flags, tabling at community events, marching in the Pride parade and more. We made these commitments as a church community years ago and it bore fruit in November 2021, after the Club Q shooting. Both the morning after the shooting and in the days to follow, Vista Grande became a hub for healing and community. Because of the prophetic stance we have taken in our neighborhood, LGBTQ people trusted us to care for them in a time of great pain and trauma. The care needs of the LGBTQ community will be clarified through the coming weeks and months and I know that Vista Grande will continue to be a beacon of Progressive Christian faith in northern Colorado Springs and sanctuary for those who need it.

Beyond the parish level, I am also involved in wider church ministry, including assuming the role of co-chair of the Colorado Springs Faith Table, an interfaith community organizing group, as well as serving on the Conference Wide Committee on Ministry on the Formation and Authorization Subcommittee. These duties have kept me involved outside our doors and invested in structural change both in our city and within our denomination. I am committed to being a representative of our faith community and I am grateful for your support in that work. In order to be the best pastor I can be, I have also pursued further ministry training, including completing a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education and a certification in conflict transformation.

Above all, I am grateful for the opportunity to grow and discern with you where God is leading us. As of Epiphany, our word of the year is "HOPE" and I trust that we will live into it in the ways we foster it for ourselves and provide it to our community. It's a joy to be on this journey with you.

In hope,

Pastor Mallory

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS 2022

- Moderator: Kayan Cross
- Asst. Moderator: David Nath
- Treasurer: Dana Zimmerman
- Financial Secretary: Jerima King
- Clerk: Erika Forshee
- Member at Large: Carol Burbank
- Member at Large: Jeanne Harrington/Linda Allen

Executive Committee Activity

The Executive Council met twelve times in 2022 and held one Congregational Meeting.

In addition to the routine monthly reporting of finances, pastor's report, ministry team reports, etc; here is a brief synopsis of other business for each month:

January – Discussion of the dwindling down of our reserves and the need to move forward with a sustainable plan for building use.

February – Discussion on plans for re-entering the worship space. Discussion on Clare's sabbatical continuation plan.

March – The Lenten study is an all-read and discussion of "The Cross and the Lynching Tree" by James H. Cone. There is further discussion on the Archway possibility.

April – Discussion of offering Pastor Mallory the full-time position when Clare moves out of Colorado Springs.

May – Archway survey update and continuing discussion of mask wearing in the sanctuary.

June – Discussion on plans to educate ourselves on "anti-racism" by engaging in book studies, group engagements, and speakers.

July – EC worked on an updated list of core values and plans for an Executive Council retreat to re-group.

August – a small team is tasked to go through items in the kitchen, choir room, and nursery.

September – the church library is being re-established.

October – Bible study and kids Faith Formation are being re-launched.

November – Installation for Mallory to covenant as our lead pastor.

December – South Hall!!! Ideas and help needed.

Erika Forshee, thank you for keeping our Executive Council accountable.

2022 Moderator Report

Kayan Cross

Welcome to 2023. Vista Grande has ventured into a new year once again. This past year presented a lot of changes; some desirable, some not; some expected, some surprising. All surmountable, by our mighty little church on the hill. It also provided us the opportunity to resume some things we had not been able to do for a while such as, our Friendship Dinner at Mi Mexico, Fellowship after worship - Monthly Agape Meal, Choir, Pride Parade, and have funerals on site.

We have been doing hybrid worship and other services for over a year now. There are some who still refrain from being in the sanctuary entirely and some who refrain occasionally. The opportunity to participate in worshipping together regardless of where you are is something we have discovered the benefit of due to Covid-19.

In the Spring, Pastor Mallory facilitated a Contemplative Anti-Racism Retreat at La Foret for Vista Grande Covenantal Partners. It was an opportunity for us to grow in our awareness not only of self in relationship to the work of Anti-Racism but also a way to stay grounded in our relationship with Spirit as we become more present to the reality of the impact of racism on life.

Our relationship with Shrine of Remembrance (SoR) came to an end November 2021. We took some time to discern the next step. As a result, South Hall will be getting a face lift and made available for new occupants (TBD) and income. We would hope to lease this space to tenants more aligned with the values of our church.

Rev. Mallory Everhart was installed in February as Co-Pastor and moved into the position of Settled Pastor by unanimous Council vote as a result of Rev. Clare resigning from her then position as Co-pastor. Pastor Mallory's Installation service in November culminated on Trans Day of Remembrance and was officiated by Rev. Dr. Anthony Scott, Associate Conference Minister and Minister of Racial Justice for the RMC. This was a very tumultuous service as it was the morning after the Club Q shooting.

In October, the Executive Council had a one-day retreat to review our Mission, Vision, Open and Affirming and Just Peace statements as a means to direct us as we move forward in 2023. These statements and designations have been voted on and chosen by our congregation as dedications to who we are as a church. We want to make sure we are actively living out those decisions and commitments.

Numerous educational opportunities were made available this year.

- Rev. Dr. Anthony Scott provided us with numerous opportunities to learn and participate with other conference members in discussions and book studies related to Christianity and racism. Including the formation of the RMC Anti- Racism Ministry Team which I have joined on behalf of Vista Grande.

- The Southern Colorado Health Network provided us with an educational opportunity that allows for us to save a life by learning about opiate addiction and the importance of learning how to administer Narcan in an overdose situation.
- We were graced to spend a weekend with Rev. Nancy Niero in August as part of her dissertation on White Silence and its impact on racism. Rev. Nancy wanted to show that as White Christian people share stories of race history and actions, they have an effective impact on eliminating Racism. We were one of 3 churches in the RMC that participated in this work with Rev. Nancy although the entire conference of churches was invited. She returned in December to share the results of her study with us.
- Also, in August, Covenantal Partner, Audrey Miles-Cherney taught a First Aid and CPR class at Vista Grande for members and the larger community. Not only was this class extremely educational it also allowed for folks to be CPR certified if necessary.

In November, Rev. Dr. Anthony Scott was terminated from his position at the RMC. The Conference Board limited information and unwillingness to disclose rationale for this decision created a great deal of turmoil within the conference. Prompting many to question the boards adhering to the conference by-laws. Vista Grande's Executive Council submitted a letter supporting the need for accountability of the Conference Board to not only comply with by-laws but also to make good faith effort to be as transparent as possible. Ours was one of many submitted to the conference expressing concern.

The Moderator, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary positions have all opened up. Moderator and Treasurer have come to term limits. Financial Secretary, which has been held by Jerima King, is available due to her upcoming move which is happening mid-term.

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and diligence of both Dana Zimmerman and Jerima for the work they have put into their financial positions and every other aspect of administering that the Executive Council work has done during their time on the Council. Church governance is a definite necessity as we steward continuously forward. Don't hesitate to thank them when you see them, as well as other council members and our Administrative Assistant, Donna Bristow.

Lastly, I want to thank you all for the opportunity of being your Moderator for 2 terms. I have grown much in many ways; relationships with many of you individually, Vista Grande as a whole, the SEA and the RMC. My eyes have been opened to much about "church" that I had not seen before; desired and challenging. The biggest takeaway for me is the importance of recognizing that we are journeying together regardless. The privilege of being Moderator has allowed me to represent and participate in the process of keeping us on the journey chosen by this congregation, the path by which we go and the image we create enroute. Hopefully I have represented you all in a manner that allows you to maintain honor and pride in being a member of this Spiritual Family.

Assistant Moderator

David Nath

The past year has been a very dynamic time in the life of Vista Grande. The Assistant Moderator is to perform the duties of the Moderator when the Moderator is absent and other tasks as designated by the Executive Council. Kayan has been very present in the life of our church, so there has been no need to step in to assist as Moderator. Since my inception of coming on to the council, the other task that has been designated has been coordination with Ministry Teams. This has been quite a challenge due to covid impacting the routine life of the church and inactivity of most of our Ministry Teams. So I have spent my time finding opportunities to assist in the reengagement of our church family in a return to a community life in the church, largely in assisting with needed improvements and repairs around the church. Throughout 2022, we discovered many new ways to engage not only as our Vista Grande family, but as a part of our wider community. I am very proud of the role VGUCC has taken in the wake of violence in our greater community and in the loving care our members provide to those in need within our community.

Member at Large

Linda Allen

At the close of this partial year of service I can report to you that I have learned much about the practices and functioning of Vista Grande. My life in Vista Grande is three plus years old and I continue to be amazed at the work this church takes on.

My service resides largely in day-to-day activities and actions like setting out dishes for our agape meal once per month and clearing up and washing dishes. It is my goal to continue learning about our church family and how we accomplish the best for ourselves and our wider community as we continue to focus on the larger issues like antiracism, social justice, and inclusiveness.

I am always available by phone or email should any covenantal partner need an ear.

I ask for your tolerance as I attempt to grow in the kin-dom.

Member at Large

Carol Burbank

Covid 19 has been a challenge this year as the virus continues to mutate causing concern, but this church family has continued to step up and keep our congregation and church vibrant throughout the year. As a voice for all members, I look forward to getting suggestions, ideas, and input as we march into 2023 with our visions and actions of how WE are the church.

Pastoral Relations Committee

Submitted by Dave Bristow

The team of Dave Bristow, Carol Burbank, and Nancy Morlock-Hollins remained the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) during 2022 for Rev. Clare Twomey. A new team of Linda Coonley, David Nath and Deborah Tinsley was created for Rev. Mallory Everhart. When Pastor Clare resigned Dave Bristow joined Pastor Mallory's PRC team.

Ministers are called to embody and encourage the faith of the Church and its members. The relationship between a pastor and congregants should be tended deliberately, so that ministries of both pastor and congregation complement each other and further God's grace in the world.¹

The Pastoral Relations Committee exists in a congregation to advise, assist, and promote the growth of this vital relationship.

This committee serves in two principal ways:

- as an advisory group to the pastor and as support for the pastor's leadership by sharing ideas, dreams, hopes, expectations, and concerns of the congregation, and
- as support for the pastor by interpreting roles, functions, and needs of the pastor to the congregation.

The committee works in a context of confidentiality, support, care, and honesty with the pastor, while promoting healthy communication in the congregation.

After Pastor Clare returned from her sabbatical, her team met with her on several occasions including the one she informed us of her desire to return to the east coast and would be resigning her position with us.

Pastor Mallory's team has been meeting with her monthly.

Those who hold ministerial standing in the UCC are entrusted with and accountable for the faithfulness and effectiveness of their lives and ministries on its behalf. The development and demonstration of such faithfulness and effectiveness are guided by the Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the UCC (the Marks). The Marks strive to highlight the complex combination of talents, understandings, and skills needed for ministerial leadership in the UCC.

At the last PRC meeting of 2022 we discussed the use of the Marks as a meaningful method of accomplishing the goals of the team.

1 "A Sure Foundation" produced by Ministerial Excellence, Support & Authorization (MESA) Ministry Team 2018 United Church of Christ.

CONNECTING WITH THE DIVINE

Worship and Music Submitted by Pastor Mallory

As we learn to navigate the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we have leaned into our hybrid style of worship while also restoring practices which are near and dear to our hearts. It is an exciting time, full of both innovation and honoring those things which are important to us. To that end, we have rewired our audio/visual system to support the new orientation of the sanctuary and the added requirements to run a fully hybrid service. We have so much gratitude for Dave Bristow, Dave Nath, and Ethan Everhart for guiding and completing that process!

To increase accessibility, we have also added closed captioning to our worship services and song leaders to assist both in-person and online with musical components. Since the autumn, we have enjoyed special music at least once per month, including solo, instrumental, and choir music. Special thanks to Amanda Udis-Kessler for being our primary accompanist and to Erin Spencer for directing the choir, facilitating rehearsals, and substitute accompanying. We are so grateful for the time, talent, and voices of the choir and everyone involved in music at VGCC!

Adult Faith Formation aka Percolate Submitted by Linda Allen

Re: Percolate. Percolate lost the longtime captain of our Percolate ship this year when Nancy Morlock-Hollins died. We miss her intensely. Our focus of discussion and study remains largely on social justice or injustice past and present. This group is functioning by consensus. We finished discussing AN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES just before Christmas. It was an eye-opening experience in many ways. We are now undertaking reading ARE PRISONS OBSOLETE by Angela Davis.

Please view our updates in the eblast as an invitation to join us at any time. We meet on zoom at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays.

Faith Formation for Kids
Submitted by Sara Weatherman

A table. A couple of adults. A couple of kids. Listen carefully. Something happens here. You might miss it – until you hear one of the children humming along to one of the hymns. He knows the tune. He has absorbed it simply by being present.

We are experimenting. We have gathered several times in the quiet room for a story and conversation before coming to the table. Then, a craft or activity that picks up on the theme. Sometimes it is really hard to be quiet! Our neighbors in the congregation are wonderful. A little noise, they smile. After years of being downstairs with the children during worship, missing the music and sermon, I am grateful to be at the table for kids.

Oh, yes. Mallory is working on some intergenerational ideas, things we all do together. Stay tuned.

FOSTERING DIVERSITY

Just Peace

Submitted by Kayan Cross

Our Just Peace work collectively culminated noticeably in a few areas and actions taken.

We continue to look into the possibility of providing affordable housing on our property. The process slowed down due to some changes in the Archway structure that created an unexpected expense on our part. This challenged us to look broader at other ways to possibly make this feasible which then led to a string of connections that have been instrumental as we move forward in the possibility of this vision.

It was great to join with Black Forest Community Church in participating in the Pride Parade again. Something that hasn't happened since 2019. Together we manifested a spiritually vibrant and visually colorful representation of support and welcoming to relationships with our queer siblings and their families.

The tragedy of the shooting and murders at Club Q hit really close to our hearts and spirits and we immediately stepped up to make space and resource available to the make space for grieving, connecting and mental health work to happen for our LGBTQIA community in Colorado Springs. Much of that included being a safe space for any and all people who needed a space to gather together in the wake of such a traumatic event. That work continues to have a home.

Getting a member on the RMC Nominating Committee after being made aware that no BIPOC people are being sent to the next 2 Synods to represent the RMC.

Continually growing our support for Smiles and Sandwiches.

Having a representative on the Accompaniment and Sanctuary Coalition in Colorado Springs. This coalition assists undocumented persons as they navigate their lives while going through the immigration system.

The Wider Church

Submitted by Donna Bristow

Vista Grande continued to be well represented at Wider Church activities during 2022. Most activities were via Zoom.

The Rocky Mountain Conference Annual Celebration with the theme, Church Anew 2, was held via Zoom June 9-11. Our voting delegates were Dana Zimmerman and Kayan Cross. Over the course of the Annual Celebration, we were represented by five other covenantal partners.

On Sunday October 29, eight folks from Vista Grande attended the Southeastern Association Annual Meeting which was held via Zoom. Our voting delegates were Dana Zimmerman and Kayan Cross.

Rev. Mallory Everhart was installed twice this year; on February 20 as Co-Pastor and then November 20 as Pastor and Teacher. Both events were well attended by church partners, community partners, and friends!

2022 Participants on Association and Conference Teams:

As the RMC has switched to a two-year experimental Conference Wide Committee on Ministry. It will consist of an Accountability Subcommittee (ACS), Formation and Authorization Subcommittee (FAS), and Supportive Oversight Subcommittee (SOS). This will standardize authorizing processes with some flexibility and provide accurate record keeping and communication. Donna agreed to be the registrar for the FAS Team and Mallory is a discernment partner for FAS.

David Bristow continued to serve his three-year term as the Southeastern Association Rep to the Rocky Mountain Conference Board of Directors. In the fall of 2021, the Director of Communications for the RMC resigned and Dave was asked to evaluate the position along with the job description to discern what was needed when hiring the new position. He is maintaining a new database getting ready for the new hire. This was a bigger project than anyone realized so he is still in that position.

Kayan Cross serves on the Nominating Committee and the Racial Justice Team.

Folks at Vista Grande fulfill our covenant with the wider church.

ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Fellowship

Submitted by Carolyn Gunning

Fellowship activities, just like our church, have been evolving over the years, especially after the shutdown from COVID. When the shutdown happened, we weren't able to hold our annual Friendship Dinner but thankfully in February of 2022 we were able to start that up again by meeting on the 11th at the Mi Mexico Restaurant on North Academy. As always, it was well attended and everyone had a great time, so glad to be meeting and greeting each other in person after the long hiatus!

Since then, we have gone back to our "roots" for our fellowship. This information is from Pastor Mallory: "In the early church, a significant part of worship was eating together and the ritual we practice as communion was once a full meal called an 'agape meal'. As we adjust to life during the ongoing pandemic, it's important for us to find ways of being in fellowship with one another, so in this modern context we are taking communion back to its roots and having a communal meal!"

Thus, the church has been having a potluck "Agape Meal" immediately following church on the first Sunday of the month, communion Sunday. This seems to be a great success with more people joining in the bonding each time it's held!

Who knows what will happen with the annual Friendship Dinner from now on? If those in charge want it to continue maybe there will be someone who will organize it for this year or maybe, we will just continue with the Agape Potluck as our ongoing fellowship.

Meanwhile, Men's Breakfast has met regularly at various locations, the location being decided by those who were there, on the second Wednesday of every month at 8 a.m. There has always been a good turnout with good conversations according to the Burbanks!

Communication and Advertising

Submitted by Donna Bristow

Our outdoor sign and Facebook have been our most frequent ways to advertise. Thanks to Erin Spencer for keeping Facebook updated.

Our quarterly newsletter, *Vista Views* and mini monthly ads were available through our website. Communication to the congregation was also made through our weekly e-blasts on Mondays and Thursdays. Pastor Clare (January – May) and Pastor Mallory (June – December) continued a weekly Pastor's Blurb which is also on our website; http://vgcc.org/?page_id=287. Our website is www.vgcc.org and Vista Grande is also on Facebook! Our e-mail address is admin@vgcc.org

Mission Ministry

Submitted by our Mission Coordinators

Vision for Mission

Mission/Outreach is an integral part of VGCC ministries. We will pursue opportunities that are 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 Three Great Loves: Love of Neighbor, Love of Children, and Love of Creation.

Our local missions for 2022 were Chinook Center “People’s Pantry”, Family Promise, Inside-Out Youth Services, Los Pobres, and One Nation Walking Together.

All these missions are relational; in other words, several of our covenantal partners have hands-on involvement with each mission. Based, proportionally on previous giving, we also allot a certain amount of our mission budget to each of these missions, and we commit to pay each one quarterly. We also support the UCC’s 5 for 5. Out of our mission budget, again based on previous giving, we financially support Neighbors in Need, One Great Hour of Sharing, Our Churches Wider Mission, Strengthen the Church and The Christmas Fund. We have met all our quarterly goals for 2022.

All our meetings are open. We generally meet after church on Zoom once a quarter. Now that we are becoming more visible in the community, we may meet every two months. Read the weekly e-blasts for dates. Please join us. If you would like to submit an item for the agenda, please see Donna or Jerima.

Chinook Center, The People’s Grocery

www.chinookcenter.org

Submitted by Jerima King

Free grocery distribution every Sunday supported by donations and community collaboration. VGUCC has donated money and three covenantal partners; Jerima King, Terri Urban, and Linda Coonley volunteer in the delivery of food to those in need throughout COS.

Throughout the year, we collected items for Spreading Smiles and Sandwiches, which are delivered to houseless folks once a month at Dorchester Park. I think it has been at least 4 months where church folks did the bulk of the distributions, including making over 200 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, close to 70 beef stew cups, pumpkin pie cups, and +200 snack bags (with crackers and cookies). Covenantal partners also donated +150 rolls of toilet paper, 5 cases of hand warmers and over 10 bags of clothes, socks, coats, gloves and hats.

Family Promise

www.ihn-cos.org

Submitted by Donna Bristow

Ups and Downs (excerpts from the Interim Executive Director Andrea Grebas)

“At Family Promise of Colorado Springs, we are doing self-reflection. In the Spring and Summer, we had some downs of closing programs and letting staff go, and yet there were the ups right alongside that. In 2022, we were able to help keep 44 families in their homes through our Homeless Prevention services; we welcomed and served 40 families in our Emergency Shelter programs; and helped 27 families with children who were experiencing homelessness be Rehoused into stable housing. We are honored to have served 377 parents and children in 2022! We hit the mark in relaunching in-person hosting in our Interfaith Hospitality Network family shelter program (IHN), after two and a half years of congregations not hosting but continuing to provide meals for the families. Through the relaunch of IHN, came with some misses that we recognized were due to the impacts of the pandemic, such as needing additional staff resources to support our programs, as well as having lost some of our host congregations.”

“In 2023, we look forward to sharing more consistently our journey and our family’s journeys, we aspire to serve more families experiencing housing instability and homelessness in the community and are excited to build what Family Promise of Colorado Springs will look like in this post pandemic world, to continue helping families in the community.”

Vista Grande continued to provide meals for the IHN program. Although, we aren’t quite back to involving the congregation more, we hope to do that in 2023. We also provided financial help from our mission budget, thanks to all our folks who continued their pledges to Mission.

Inside-Out Youth Services

www.insideoutys.org

Coordinator - OPEN

“Every day we see the impact of your generosity in the LGBTQIA2+ youth space. Young people from all walks of life come to our center and find solace and resources your giving provides. Young people transform into their most confident and true self when they are among people who understand and affirm them. Thanks for your donations that help us keep our food pantry stocked. Your donations also bring peer support programming to our center and outreach to the community.”

Nico, the Executive Director, came to Vista Grande on Nov 20. We were in the planning stages of providing a gift registry for the youth for holiday gifts. Unfortunately, after the Club Q shooting in November, IOYS had to temporarily close its facility to the youth while they established safety measures for their youth and staff.

In coordination with The Place, Inside-Out has opened its doors this winter to provide a temporary drop-in Warming Shelter for homeless youth aged 15-24.

Los Pobres

Submitted by Jud Jusell

For 23 years now, El Centro de Los Pobres in Avondale Colorado has been providing food, shelter, medical assistance, utilities, education and various other types of support to southern Colorado migrant workers. Many of these workers come from Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, El Salvador and other countries in Central and South America. The majority of those served live in and around Pueblo, but some live in Colorado Springs.

This year, the Colorado government has approved a health care assistance program (copays but no premiums) that would benefit undocumented individuals. Los Pobres volunteers have assisted 150 individuals and families so far to sign up for this plan. During 2022, VGCC donated car loads of material contributions as well as over \$600 of Walmart gift cards to be used for food and other items.

Sister Nancy, the Director of Los Pobres, passes on her heartfelt appreciation for VGCC's faithful support of undocumented immigrants here in Colorado. She said, "the peace and blessing of the VGCC family is felt all the way down here in Pueblo."

Our heartfelt thanks go to Rev. Faye Gallegos for 22 years of serving as the liaison between VGCC and Los Pobres. Sister Nancy called Faye a "gentle and remarkable woman who comes with her whole self [to serve]." As of November, Jud Jusell has taken over the liaison role with Los Pobres for VGCC.

Please hold in your prayers Sister Nancy, her volunteers and all of the individuals and families served by Los Pobres.

One Nation Walking Together

www.onenationwt.org

Submitted by Judy Druelinger

Our church has supported ONWT for a number of years. This organization supports people living on Native American Reservations in Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota, New Mexico, Colorado, and Arizona. They also help Native people living in the Colorado Springs area. They take requested items to the various locations and help with projects that the different communities need. This year VGCC-UCC participated in One Nations food drive. It started with a single can that grew to fill the entire bed of a big pick-up truck several layers deep. I was overwhelmed by the generosity of our people. During the summer we collected school supplies and again our people came through. This winter we collected things to fill 30 Elder Boxes. We the people of VGCC can be very proud of our support of this wonderful organization. This is a mission that does good things for our Native American neighbors.

The UCC 5 for 5 Missions

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) – supports international programs of health, education and agricultural development, relief, and refugee assistance.

Strengthen the Church - This offering grows the UCC's future by funding *The Stillspeaking Ministry*, new and renewing churches, youth and young adult ministries, and lay and pastoral leadership formation.

Neighbor in Need (NIN) - This offering supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

The Christmas Fund - Proceeds are used to provide gifts to clergy and lay employees in all stages of their lives and ministries to and through the UCC.

Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) - This was paid through our General Budget.

Unlike mission-directed giving, OCWM Basic Support allows the Conference to retain a supportive staff that provides necessary guidance and resources to support the health and vitality of our churches; 78% remains in the RMC and 22% supports the National Office.

Funding missions:

Many folks pledged to our missions in 2022 and others gave to special appeals. Our group mission results:

Financial Giving Directly to Mission Programs - \$28,584*

In Kind Giving to Mission Programs - \$4,752

Mileage traveled (469 miles) to support Missions calculated – \$125

Volunteer Hours (848 hours) spent to support Mission Activity (@ \$24/hr) – \$20,352

Total for Mission Giving: \$ 53,813

In-Kind Non-Mission Donations

We are very grateful to folks who gave “in kind” items and volunteer hours to the many ministries at Vista Grande; program, property, worship, faith formation, and office. These were estimated at \$4,052 in items and 441 hours which translates to \$10,584. We could accomplish a lot more because of these gifts.

Total for In Kind Giving: \$14,636

* The mission totals are higher than the treasurer's report because these numbers include cash donations that were submitted directly to the mission recipient.

EMBODYING OUR VALUES

Admin Report

Submitted by Donna Bristow

During 2022, our staffing capacities have been kept to a minimum. Amanda Udis-Kessler and Erin Spencer offered their musical talents in order to keep live music during our worship services. We are blessed!

Contracts and W-4s for our pastors and administrative assistant are kept current. Meeting minutes, policies, and other pertinent documents are kept on file.

In working toward best practices in finances and safety measures, we performed background checks on our financial folks through Praesidium, Inc, contracted through our UCC Insurance Board and viewed online "safe church" training modules through Armatus.

Our property insurance is maintained through the United Church of Christ Insurance Board.

Covenantal Partners and Memorials

Vista Grande UCC began the year with 71 recorded covenantal partners/members and affiliates. Three new persons were received as covenantal partners. At the end of 2022, one person was moved to inactive status, two withdrawals, and one covenantal partner death. Vista Grande ended the year with 70 covenantal partners. Average Hybrid worship attendance for 2022 was 41.

In Memoriam

Pamela Dawn Puterbaugh

Daughter of Covenantal Partner Phil Puterbaugh and Carol's daughter-in-law.

November 1, 1972 - September 8, 2022

In Elementary School, Pamela, an honor student, developed a strong interest in writing, especially poetry. That continued from Middle School through College. She entered a summer writing program at Oxford University in England.

As a young adult, her faith in God led her to serving on mission trips to California, Mexico, and France. Her passion for travel led her to work as a travel agent in the Denver area.

Pamela fought a brave battle with dysautonomia and mast cell activation syndrome.

Pastor Mallory officiated at a hybrid memorial service on October 12, 2022. Pamela is forever missed by her family and friends.

Nancy Morlock-Hollins
April 2, 1946 – September 7, 2022

Nancy became a Covenantal Partner aka Member with Vista Grande in 1985.

She was a pillar of Vista Grande UCC. Over her 37 active years, she provided her gifts to serve on every team we offered; from Moderator in 1987 to cleaning the church facilities before she couldn't anymore. The list goes on and on, however, I'll highlight a few: Council as Moderator; Faith Formation, Adults, Youth and Kids; Worship, Choir; Finance, Treasurer; Mission, coordinator for Inside Out Youth services (IOYS) and supporter of all our missions; Membership; Programs, Picnics and Youth Documentary Academy (YDA); Facilities, indoor and outdoor cleanup.

When the New Century Hymnal was released in 1995, Nancy chose "In the Midst of New Dimensions" as her favorite hymn. She sung with gusto and purpose, especially the refrain – "God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagle's soar, we your people, ours the journey, now and ever, now and evermore."

After Nancy was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease aka ALS, we honored her on Jan. 15 - Nancy's Day. Many people got to share stories and words of thanksgiving. One area that was well-mentioned was her passion for the youth and her fervor with youth group.

Pastor Mallory officiated at a hybrid memorial service on October 15, 2022. We love you and miss you!

Facilities/Real Estate
Submitted by Carol Burbank

As we look for a leader for our facilities/real estate team, I will try to recap what was accomplished in 2022. If I have missed or overlooked someone or a project, please forgive me. At least two outdoor workdays were organized, and many came to accomplish a great deal of hard work. Weeds were pulled, areas cleaned up, the previous sign at South Hall was demolished and recycled. Many individuals stepped up and volunteered their time to pull weeds, mow the grass, and continue to keep it as neat and tidy as possible throughout the summer season.

Many others volunteered time and energy to tidying up the inside of the church. Going through items and determining if they should be saved, donated, or discarded. This is a job that many of us want to do in our homes, but not always something we like to do.

The cleaning of the kitchen and reorganizing cupboards is a job well done.

Our lending library has been moved and reorganized making it visible and accessible for everyone.

All of these projects keep our inside and outside building clean, updated, and a pleasant area to view and visit.

Thanks to everyone that participated and made a huge improvement in how our church building appears from the outside.

We continue to look at South Hall and determine the path that the church will take to bring it in line with our usage and missions. There could be some workdays scheduled to painting the interior as we move into 2023, so watch for those notices. Again, your ideas, input, and participation is always welcome.

Lilly Grant

We are finishing up the reconciliation and paperwork that is due on the Lilly Grant that was awarded to Rev. Clare Twomey. It has been an honor and privilege for both Pastor Clare and our Church to be part of this prestigious grant process.

2022 Financial Secretary Report
 Financial Secretary – Jerima King

The pledged amounts for Operating and Mission in 2022 were both well supported by the congregation. The non-pledged Operating and Plate were both under in 2022 which we believe is due to the pandemic causing us to change the way we carry out “in person worship”. The 2023 pledging is down for Operating and Mission at this time.

| Year | # Pledges | Pledged | | Pledged Collected | | Non Pledged Collected | | |
|------|-----------------|-----------|---------|-------------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|-------|
| | | Operating | Mission | Operating | Mission | Operating | Mission | Plate |
| 2022 | 26 ¹ | 74,930 | 23,885 | 76,985 | 22,485 | 9,418 | 240 | 186 |
| 2023 | 24 ² | 66,450 | 17,720 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

Note: 1. Final tally at end of year
 2. Tally at beginning of year

Treasurer's Report
Submitted by Dana Zimmerman

Another challenging year! It seems I say that every year, but it's true.

The Executive Council wants to sincerely thank everyone who was so faithful with your pledges as we ended the year with income in the General Fund exceeding the pledged amount! Pledges for the General Fund for 2023 are lagging a little behind but we are hopeful that a few late pledges will at least bring us up to the level of last year. Feel free to increase your pledge!

One of our big challenges this year was how to handle our budget without the rental income from South Hall. We were hopeful that a partnership with Archway Housing would solve that problem and put us in a position to remain on our property and go forward with greatly reduced expenses while living into our vision of providing affordable housing. Although we ran into some glitches in that plan there are some other options under consideration by the Executive Council.

As we have kept a tight rein on our expenses, and had a much smaller deficit than anticipated, it seems the answer to our dilemma lies in increased income. The Executive Council is pursuing several options.

Our mission giving shows VGUCC's commitment to serving others. VGUCC continues to be a "5 for 5" church, which means we support the 5 areas of mission within the UCC denomination, as indicated in the mission detail chart. We continue to support our six local missions with financial support as well as nonmonetary gifts and volunteer support.

As always, mission pledges and any other monies given to a restricted fund will only be used for those purposes. Restricted funds roll over to the following year.

Your Executive Council is ever vigilant for opportunities to save on expenses, provide additional income, and chart a financially sound course for VGUCC.

| Part 1 - General Fund | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| INCOME | 2022 Budget | 2022 Actual | 2023 Proposed |
| Pledges | 74,630.00 | 76,984.97 | 66,450.00 |
| Plate Offerings | 500.00 | 186.00 | 500.00 |
| Non-Pledged Checks | 6,000.00 | 9,367.80 | 10,000.00 |
| South Hall Rental | | | |
| King Soopers Bonus | 1,200.00 | 777.48 | 1,000.00 |
| Fund Raisers | | - | |
| Misc. | | 5,248.84 | |
| TOTAL | 82,330.00 | 92,565.09 | 77,950.00 |
| EXPENSES | 2022 Budget | 2022 Actual | 2023 Proposed |
| Faith Formation | 100.00 | 23.16 | 100.00 |
| Finance | 700.00 | 752.39 | 850.00 |
| Membership | 1,250.00 | 1,134.75 | 1,250.00 |
| Office & General | 2,500.00 | 1,921.76 | 2,530.00 |
| Programs | 300.00 | 1,063.74 | 800.00 |
| Property | 30,671.00 | 32,685.20 | 32,280.00 |
| Worship | 450.00 | 164.42 | 300.00 |
| Payroll | 81,418.04 | 75,519.39 | 77,899.16 |
| TOTAL | 117,389.04 | 113,264.81 | 116,009.16 |
| INCOME - EXPENSES | (35,059.04) | (20,699.72) | (38,059.16) |

| Part 2 - Restricted Funds | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| ACCOUNT | Balance 12/31/21 | Income | Expenses | Balance 12/31/22 |
| Missions | 5,564.99 | 23,449.77 | 25,772.97 | 3,191.79 |
| Pastor Discretionary | 1,487.01 | 942.01 | 200.00 | 2,229.02 |
| Covid 19 Help | 1,655.57 | | 381.88 | 1,273.69 |
| Youth | 918.74 | | | 918.74 |
| Choir | 892.94 | | | 892.94 |
| Women's Retreat | 198.21 | | | 198.21 |
| Covenantal Partner Care | 446.54 | 100.00 | 123.36 | 423.18 |
| Zoom Equipment | 639.13 | | 61.01 | 578.12 |
| General Revolving | - | 3,435.00 | 3,035.00 | 400.00 |
| Flags | 75.00 | | | 75.00 |
| In the Mud Grant | 333.76 | | | 333.76 |
| Memorial Gifts | 5,558.03 | 500.00 | | 6,058.03 |
| TOTAL | 17,769.92 | 28,426.78 | 29,574.22 | 16,572.48 |

| MISSIONS DETAIL | Paid In 2022 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Family Promise | 2,700.00 |
| Inside Out Youth Services | 2,600.00 |
| Los Pobres | 2,600.00 |
| One Nation Walking Together | 2,600.00 |
| Smiles & Sandwiches | 515.00 |
| Chinook Center | 2,300.00 |
| 5/5 Our Church's Wider Mission | 4,000.00 |
| 5/5 One Great Hour of Sharing | 1,500.00 |
| 5/5 Strengthen the Church | 1,000.00 |
| 5/5 Neighbors in Need | 1,000.00 |
| 5/5 The Christmas Fund | 1,050.00 |
| Mission Speakers | 200.00 |
| Benefit Programs | 400.00 |
| Misc. | 3,307.97 |
| TOTAL | 25,772.97 |
| 2023 MISSION PLEDGES | 17,720.00 |

Part 3 - Bank Account and United Church Funds

| ACCOUNT | Balance 12/31/21 | Balance 12/31/22 |
|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Checking | 47,346.22 | 25,449.06 |
| United Church Funds | 50,168.65 | unavailable |